





## Broken and split, Algerian Islamists seek resurrection

By Elaine Ganley  
The Associated Press

ALGIERS — Once combative and confident in their quest for power, Muslim fundamentalists are now divided and uncertain as they struggle to reestablish a role as a decisive political force.

The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the main opposition party, was humbled by an army crackdown that included the arrest of its top two leaders June 30 following their calls for a holy war.

But the movement is regrouping in spite of a state of emergency imposed June 5 by President Chadli Benjedid.

The front "is a giant that can only be beaten by the will of God," one of the movement's new leaders, Abdelkader Hachani, said Friday at the close of a two-day meeting of its supreme council.

The meeting, in the eastern town of Betna, was the first formal strategy session since the arrests of Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadi, the charismatic leaders who transformed the front from a grass-roots movement to a political and social whirlwind.

The high council meeting failed to designate an interim leader to replace Mr. Madani, but cautiously opted to continue his hard-line policies for an Islamic state.

"They have not succeeded in domesticating the front," said Rachid Kalet, a national secretary of the Front for Socialist Forces, a leading centrist party not linked to the Islamic movement.

More than 5,000 people were arrested, including seven top FIS leaders, in the late June crackdown following fundamentalist strikes and mass protests. Nearly 50 people died in clashes, according to official figures. Others put the number at up to 500.

During the crackdown, some fundamentalist leaders went underground. Many of their followers exchanged white robes for Western dress.

At the Kouba Mosque in west Algiers Friday, two weeks after soldiers rushed worshippers, tense crowds filed past soldiers ringing the enclosure or crouching in

shrubs. "They call this democracy?" said one front militant, nodding towards a line of troops.

The front, born out of riots in October 1988, won control of a majority of councils in nationwide local elections a year ago. The outcome was a shock for the National Liberation Front (FLN), which has ruled Algeria singlehandedly since independence from France in 1962.

Amid the June unrest, President Benjedid bowed to the Islamic opposition's demand for early presidential elections. He also postponed the country's first multiparty parliamentary elections, planned for June 27, until sometime later this year.

But the crackdown kindled a power struggle over whether to continue the strikes and protests is now full-blown.

So-called "legitimists," headed by Mr. Hachani, want to follow Mr. Madani's militant quest for an Islamic state. Moderates seek a role within the legal boundaries of party politics.

The council said the front would participate in an election-planning conference this week only if the state of emergency were lifted and political prisoners freed. Beginning Tuesday, the government and about 50 political parties are scheduled to discuss preparations for parliamentary elections.

The decision represents a clear challenge to the government, which needs the Islamic group's participation to make the vote legitimate.

The front draws its main power base from the illiterate and impoverished segments of Algeria, which is in its worst economic crisis.

"People look for something to say, 'we exist, too,'" said Mohammed Hariz, 35, an elected FIS official from the Casbah, a poor corner of the capital.

Few are willing to predict how the salvation front will weather the crisis, but political observers expect it to remain a force.

Mr. Madani and Mr. Belhadi "decided to struggle and knew they would be imprisoned, tortured or killed," said Mr. Hariz. "But they raised the political



Chadli Benjedid

consciousness. They pushed people to take an interest in their lives."

"I don't think that is the front that matters," said a Western diplomat on condition of anonymity. "It is the angry front that matters. The question is: How big is that angry front?"

FLN opposes poll reforms  
Reuters

The National Liberation Front (FLN), the largest party in Algeria, said it opposed changes in the rules for multiparty elections due later this year.

Electoral reform is expected to dominate the all-party conference opening Tuesday. Prime Minister Sidahmed Ghazali called the conference to find a way out of the political crisis which broke out in Algeria in June.

FLN Secretary General Abdelbasset Mebri told a news conference Saturday the FLN, once the country's sole political party, would take part in the meeting.

But he added, "These (electoral) laws have become the law of the land. They are not drafted prepared by an outgoing government... to challenge them is to create a bad precedent which is not in the interests of emerging democracy."

The FIS says the laws gerrymander constituency boundaries to its disadvantage and in favour of the FLN, which controls the present parliament.

A majority of the 50 political parties operating in Algeria also favour changes in the electoral laws and Mr. Ghazali, appointed after the crisis broke out, has not ruled out amendments.

Mr. Mebri said the FLN central committee, which failed to elect a new political bureau at meetings in June and July because of internal disputes, would make another attempt on Aug. 8.

## Iraq says pipelines to Turkey repaired

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq, its trade with the world blocked for nearly a year, said Sunday that pipelines which carried its oil exports to Turkey before the Gulf crisis had been repaired.

Oil Minister Usama Al Hiti, in an interview published in the government newspaper Al Jumhuriyah, said Iraq was now going to give priority to mending its export pipeline to Saudi Arabia and had drawn up plans to repair its oil terminals in the Gulf.

He gave no details of Iraq's current production capacity, which was seriously damaged by U.S. and allied Gulf war air raids, particularly in the southern fields.

"The Turkish pipelines are now capable of pumping all the production of the northern fields," he said.

"Iraq is getting ready to maintain the Saudi pipeline on the Iraqi side so that it is ready to pump oil when needed."

Iraq has asked the Security Council to ease the U.N. trade blockade to allow it to sell oil to buy food and medicine.

Turkey and Saudi Arabia closed the taps on the pipelines, Iraq's economic lifeline, after Iraq invaded Kuwait last August.

Saudi Arabia was host to the U.S.-led multinational force that fought Iraq at the end of February and ejected it from Kuwait.

Mr. Hiti expressed the hope that there would be no problems reopening the pipelines.

He told Reuters in June that Iraq hoped to be producing its Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) quota of 3.2 million barrels a day by the end of next year.

Pre-war northern oil production from Kirkuk and two smaller fields, which escaped serious damage during the fighting, was 1.3 million bpd.

Iraq could transport oil to Aqaba by road but Mr. Hiti said that this option was too expensive to make economic sense.

## Kuwait to retain press censorship

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — Government censorship of the local press will not be lifted any time soon, but the government is working on a new publications law, Information Minister Badr Jassem Al Yacoub has been quoted as saying.

There is no intention of lifting censorship on the press for the time being," Mr. Yacoub told the Arabic daily Al Watan.

Censorship was imposed on the press after the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, dissolved parliament in 1986.

During the seven-month Iraqi occupation, all of the seven daily newspapers and 30 weeklies and monthlies disappeared from the streets, to be replaced by several underground publications.

One of the underground papers, named "February 26" for the date of Kuwait's liberation, tried to publish after the occupation but was shut down under martial law orders.

Two new newspapers have begun publication in Kuwait since the war, and three of the pre-war dailies are back in operation.

All are published in Arabic, and each is visited daily by a government censor who vets copy. Even advertisements are checked.

Editors say censorship has eased up since the war so that articles critical of the government's policies, along with satirical columns, are getting past the censors.

They sometimes contain stories on topics such as the opposition, the suspended parliament, stateless Arabs and full democracy, which were not allowed before the war.

But many newspapers are having trouble because Iraqi troops took their presses and vandalised their offices and files during the occupation. They have not been able to rehire staffers of Palestinian origin or Yemeni, Sudanese or Jordanians.

In Saturday's interview, Mr. Yacoub defended the decision to close "February 26," the first broadsheet printed after liberation.

He said it had failed to obtain a government license to publish, but opposition leaders say it was too critical for the government's taste.

"We have 500 applications for licenses," the minister told Al Watan, adding: "It is not possible to approve them all, or else we will end up with 507 newspapers and that's more papers than what is published in the whole world."

Voting right for women  
Kuwait's all-male parliament is

being asked to consider backing plans to give the emirate's women the right to vote.

A seven-man legal committee is urging the National Council to debate a draft bill. The council, elected last year, has no legislative power but can put proposals to the government for consideration.

"In the event of the bill being approved by the council, I do not see obstacles in the way of the Kuwaiti women being given the right to stand for parliament in future," committee member Kazem Abu Abbas said in Sawt Al Kuwait newspaper.

Sheikh Jaber has praised the role of women in resisting the Iraqi occupation.

Sheikh Jaber has promised to consider giving women the right to vote in parliamentary elections scheduled for October 1992.

Kuwait has an all-male electorate of 63,000 people.

Rewarding families too costly  
Plans to reward every Kuwaiti family with \$70,000 for suffering caused by the Iraqi occupation would force the emirate to sell chunks of its foreign assets, Kuwait's investment chief says.

"If a decision is made on this issue we will be forced to liquidate parts of the investments that were built to be a cushion for future generations," Abdullah Al Gabandi, head of Kuwait Investment Authority, was quoted as saying in Sunday's Al Qabas newspaper.

"There is no justification for this grant, it is a waste of state funds," said Mr. Gabandi, who is in charge of the emirate's \$100-billion in foreign assets.

The National Council has urged the government to pay every family 20,000 dinars (\$70,000).

The central bank said last week it would cost \$8 billion to finance the scheme.

Finance Minister Nasser Al Rodhan said opposed the idea.

Air France cargo  
Air France will resume cargo flights to Kuwait next month, almost exactly one year after Iraq invaded the emirate, France's flag carrier has announced.

The weekly flights will begin Aug. 4, two days after the first anniversary of Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion, an Air France spokesman said.

The flights, made by Boeing 747 cargo jets, will carry up to 100 tons of freight along the Paris-Kuwait-Abu Dhabi-Bangkok route.

## U.S. House speaker favours probe into hostage release delay

WASHINGTON (R) — The speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives said Saturday he was inclined to approve an investigation of allegations that aides to former President Ronald Reagan held up release of American hostages by Iran to aid Mr. Reagan's 1980 election.

"I would like to do that and the probability is that I'm tending toward doing it," Thomas Foley said on CNN's "Evans Novak" political chat show.

He said he would not order an investigation with a preconception that the allegation is true but only because "we need to have the rumours put to rest."

Mr. Foley said there was no evidence that President George Bush, then Mr. Reagan's vice presidential running mate, was involved in any such effort.

"I take exactly at his word the president's statement that he was not involved in any way in such activity," he said.

He also said he knew of no evidence that any of Mr. Reagan's campaign aides met with Iranians for the specific purpose of having them hold up the release of U.S. hostages to prevent then President Jimmy Carter from being re-elected.

But Mr. Foley said: "I think there's evidence that conversations took place and I think we need to go further into the question."

Iranians held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days before releasing them the day of Mr. Reagan's inauguration as president on Jan. 20, 1981.

The allegation against Reagan campaign aides was made primarily by former Carter adviser Gary Sick.

He has said there are indications that Mr. Reagan's 1980 campaign director, the late William Casey who later became Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director, met with Iranians in Madrid and promised to sell U.S. arms to Iran if it would not release the hostages before the election and so aid Mr. Carter's re-election.

## Arens: Israel accepts conference

(Continued from page 1)

they say that the Arabs accepted our demand. We are the only ones who say they haven't."

After the cabinet meeting, Religious Affairs Minister Avner Shalev said he thought the key question of Palestinian representation in the peace conference could be settled in a few days.

Mr. Shalev said the government expected clarifications on the makeup of the Palestinian delegation shortly and then would respond to Mr. Baker's peace initiative.

"Israel has in principle said yes, but this is conditioned by the Palestinians not being from East Jerusalem and not being members of the PLO," he told reporters.

A source said Mr. Levy, in this three-day visit to Cairo, would seek Egypt's help in starting the peace talks and might consult with Egyptian leaders on the Palestinian delegation.

Mr. Levy would like the Egyptians to keep Syria "at bay," keeping the Syrians from making any demands for return of the Golan Heights, said the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Mr. Levy, the strongest advocate of peace moves in Mr. Shamir's government, fears repeated

Syrian comments could cause far-right ministers to topple the government. This could bring new elections and a long delay in the peace process.

Israeli opposition leader Shimon Peres was quoted Sunday as saying that Palestinians from Arab Jerusalem should be allowed to take part in peace talks.

Mr. Peres told the French weekly Le Journal du Dimanche that his Labour Party favoured the participation of Palestinians who lived or worked in East Jerusalem.

"If an American votes in Paris in U.S. presidential elections, that does not mean Paris has, or is going to, become his capital city," Mr. Peres told the weekly.

Mr. Peres said: "Jerusalem Palestinians have a Jordanian passport and their presence in a Palestinian delegation would not prejudice the status of the city."

Israel favours Washington as a venue for any negotiations, Foreign Minister Levy said.

"It is no secret that we prefer Washington," he said in an interview in Sunday's Al Ahran newspaper of Cairo.

"The United States... is the superpower today. I don't see any one else rejecting Washington. Any other venue will cause divisions," said Mr. Levy.

## PLO ready to make peace

(Continued from page 1)

world politics for ever.

"Don't think America will always be the leader of the world forever and ever. America like others who reached the top will fall again," Mr. Sourani said.

Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said Sunday U.S. peace efforts in the Middle

East were likely to fail because they were aimed at gaining advantage for Israel.

"America is seeking to exploit the recent Persian Gulf crisis to Israel's advantage and towards the resolution of their problem," Mr. Rafsanjani told visiting Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens.

## Saddam assails sanctions

(Continued from page 1)

cities — that the Iraqi people have been punished enough.

The blame laid at the government's feet, especially for convincing the Iraqis that there would be no war, is no longer as sharp.

"When the war started, they were very shocked in the beginning, and then they were bitter," said Baghdad political science professor Saad Jawad.

Sanctions are erasing that bitterness, he said, "they believe that the West is out to destroy them."

Iraq has asked the U.N. Sanctions Committee and the Security Council to ease the blockade, and allow it to export \$1.5 billion worth of oil to raise money for food and medicines.

The man in charge of the U.N. relief effort in Iraq and Kuwait, Prince Sadruddin Ali Khan, has recommended that Iraq be allowed access to money for food and medicines through the unfreezing of its \$3.5 billion in assets abroad or through oil sales.

"It is evident that for large numbers of the people of Iraq, every passing month brings closer the brink of calamity," the prince said on July 15 in a report drawn up by a U.N. fact-finding team that spent more than two weeks touring the country.

Many ordinary Iraqis, who did not feel U.S. and allied Gulf war

attacks were directed against them as individuals, see the continuation of sanctions as something personal.

Struggling against the crippling cost of food and other essentials, many ask what they have done to be targeted in this way.

Mr. Bush, in apparent recognition of the shift in Iraqi public opinion, went out of his way last week to say that Washington's quarrel was not with the Iraqi people.

President Saddam described the continuation of sanctions as a scandal and accused neighbouring Iran of treachery for stirring up the post-Gulf war Shiite rebellion.

"They have imposed sanctions on us under the pretext of demanding our withdrawal from Kuwait," he said.

"Now that we are out of Kuwait, why should the economic blockade continue? Look how much they hate you!"

Without singling out any Western leaders by name, he said the continuation of sanctions was a punishment for Iraq for standing up for Arab rights and a signal to all Arab countries.

Western leaders thought "they should make the people of Iraq pay the price so that this will be a lesson to others," he added.

"They do not want an Arab country to rise above the level of the animals."

## Bush lacks allies' consensus

(Continued from page 1)

the highest level that such a possibility does not exist," he said.

Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz said Sunday — Turkey will not allow allied aircraft to use its bases for strikes against Iraq's nuclear facilities.

Mr. Yilmaz said Turkey had agreed to the deployment of an allied force at Silopi near the Iraqi border only to deter another flow of Kurdish refugees into Turkey.

He said he doubted Washington intended to attack Iraq again. "During the visit of U.S. President Bush, the Americans said at

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher believes the U.S.-led coalition should have demanded the handover of President Saddam, a British paper said Sunday.

The Sunday Telegraph said Mrs. Thatcher expressed the view in an "outspoken" interview with Kuwaiti Television to be broadcast on Friday, the first anniversary of the Iraqi invasion. She says President Saddam's handover should have been part of the ceasefire.

## Major under pressure over nuclear exports to Iraq

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister John Major faced increasing pressure Sunday to set up an inquiry into why his government allowed export of nuclear materials to Iraq until three days after Baghdad invaded Kuwait.

"The government must set up an official inquiry, probably headed by a high court judge, so we can probe exactly what happened in each individual case," said Gordon Brown, trade spokesman for the opposition Labour Party.

The government has disclosed a list authorising the export of materials to Iraq such as uranium, plutonium and other chemicals vital to a nuclear weapons programme from Jan. 1987 until Aug. 5 1990. Iraq invaded Kuwait Aug. 2.

The list appeared as part of evidence submitted by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to a parliamentary committee investigating British exports to Iraq.

Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Lilley insisted Sunday that any items for which export licences were granted were checked by an expert committee to ensure that they could not be used for military purposes.

Mr. Lilley said Mr. Brown's fury "was a lot of fuss over

nothing" but the row is embarrassing for Mr. Major's government, already under attack for its handling of the closure of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI).

Conservative MP Kenneth Warren, chairing the committee, said Saturday there was no evidence of exports of depleted uranium, plutonium, thorium, thorium oxide, uranium, uranium acetate, zirconium, and zirconium rod took place.

Iraq, which says it concealed evidence of its uranium enrichment programme for reasons of national security, insists that its nuclear programmes were for peaceful purposes.

U.N. inspectors returned to Iraq Saturday to search for more evidence that it has tried to build a nuclear bomb.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General Hans Blix says nuclear facilities uncovered so far could not plausibly have been intended for peaceful purposes.

The team that arrived in Baghdad Saturday is the fourth to visit the country since Iraq's Gulf war rout at the end of February.

The United States has threatened to attack Iraq again if it does not reveal details of all its military secrets.

## Lebanese militia leader urges prisoner release to free hostages

BEIRUT (AP) — A leftist militia leader Sunday called on the United States and Europe to help release Arab prisoners held by Israel as a prerequisite for freeing Western hostages in Lebanon.

"We ask the United States and Europe to work for the release of the detainees held in Israeli jails in return for our assistance to free the foreign hostages in Lebanon," said Mustafa Saad, leader of the Nasserite Popular Organisation.

At least 320 inmates are held at a prison in the border village of Khiam, which is controlled by Israeli troops and their surrogates of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia.

Others are held in Israel. Mr. Saad was believed to have helped to gain the release of several international aid workers kidnapped while working at Palestinian refugee camps near the southern port city of Sidon.

Mr. Saad spoke to the Associated Press by telephone from his house in Sidon, Lebanon's third largest city, 40 kilometres south of Beirut.

"We are continuously working for the release of the hostages held in Lebanon," Mr. Saad said.

"Freeing the prisoners held by Israel will help end the plight of the Western hostages."

Shiite Muslim leaders, includ-

ing the head of the pro-franfan fundamentalist Hizbollah, considered the umbrella organisation for groups holding Westerners, have said a prisoner's swap with Israel would gain the freedom of the 13 Westerners missing in Lebanon.

Mr. Saad also appealed to the Bonn government to release two Lebanese brothers jailed in Germany.

The brothers, Mohammad Ali and Abbas Hamadi, were convicted separately of charges that included the slaying of an American serviceman during a 1985 plane hijacking.

"Germany should release the Hamadi brothers as it promised to do after the freeing of two German hostages," Mr. Saad said.

He was referring to Rudolf Cordes, kidnapped January 1987, released in September, 1988 and Alfred Schmidt, kidnapped January 1987 and released September, 1987.

Mr. Saad said the German embassy in Beirut contacted him earlier this month, asking his intervention to help free Germans Heinrich Strubbig and Thomas Kempner, both workers with a German relief group. They were kidnapped in Sidon May 16, 1989.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

# JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

## PROGRAMME TWO

18:40

Les Grandes Batailles du passe

19:00 ..... News in French

19:30 ..... Weekly Sports Magazine

19:45 ..... News in Hebrew

20:00 ..... News in Arabic

20:30 ..... Empty Nest

21:10 ..... Murder she wrote

21:30 ..... Young Sherlock Holmes

22:30

## PRAYER TIMES

06:14 ..... Fajr

06:44 ..... (Sunrise) Dhuha

12:42 ..... Dhuha

16:25 ..... 'Asr

18:43 ..... Maghrib

21:16 ..... Isha

## CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifich Tel. 810730

Assembly of God Church, Tel. 62785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrence Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 625383

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 685326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

## WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Normal summer weather will prevail and winds will be northwesterly moderate, freshening in the afternoon. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

	Min./max. temp.
Amman	20 / 31
Aqaba	25 / 39
Deserts	20 / 36
Jordan Valley	24 / 38



## Jerash festival ends

AMMAN (J.T.) — The 10th Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts came to a close Saturday evening with Her Majesty Queen Noor and members of the festival committee attending the final performances at the ancient Greco-Roman city.

After attending the final performances, the festival's torch was put out as the Armed Forces bands played the national anthem before the Queen, committee members, governors and district governors of Irbid and Jerash.

Some 6,000 spectators attended the final performances, watching popular Lebanese singer Majida Roumi perform for two hours.

For the past 11 days, folk troupes danced and sang, displayed art exhibitions while poets recited their latest works.

Apart from the local troupes, only two foreign groups, those of Lebanon and Spain, performed at festival. The consequences of the Gulf crisis and the uncertainty created over the country's stability were believed to be major reasons behind the non-participation of other groups in this year's festival, according to festival Director Akram Masarweh.

The festival's attractions, Lebanese singer Majida Roumi and Marcel Kalifeh, drew thousands of spectators, according to eyewitnesses and observers of this year's festival.

For the first time this year a number of events related to the Jerash Festival were not held in Jerash but in a number of other sites such as Royal Cultural Centre in Amman which displayed arts and ceramics exhibitions.

The Jerash festival was initiated by Her Majesty Queen Noor, the chairperson of the Higher National Committee, with the purpose of stimulating the artistic and cultural movement, helping Jordan's culture interact with world cultures and stimulating the tourism industry in the Kingdom.

## Enrolment in universities starts Monday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Students wishing to enrol in the four government universities in Jordan Monday should start sending in their applications through post offices in various regions of the Kingdom and, according to university and Ministry of Higher Education sources, 8,340 students will be admitted for the 1991-92 academic year.

The Post Office and Postal Savings Corporation had made final arrangements for channelling the students' applications through 40 post offices which issue application forms, receive registration fees and turn the applications over to the respective universities for assessment, according to corporation Director Abdullah Al Jazi.

"The process, which will run until Aug. 5, saves time and effort for the students who would otherwise travel to the universities to hand these applications," Mr. Al Jazi said.

Students applying through this system, he said, would be requested to pay JD 15 as fees for the application forms and the postal services.

Informed sources close to universities were quoted as saying that the University of Jordan would this year accept 3,180 students, Yarmouk University 3,580, Muta University 1,200, and the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) 880.

Universities accept only those students who passed the tawjihi examinations with an average of at least 65 per cent. There are 15,737 students to have passed with this grade this year.

The universities normally select students with the higher grades and acceptance in the medical, engineering, dentistry and pharmacy faculties is normally given priority to those obtaining 85 per cent grades and above.



Ministry of Planning Secretary General Safwan Al Tal (third from right) signs accords for cultural and scientific cooperation with Indian Ambassador Gajendra Singh in Amman (third left) and (second left).



right picture) the Pakistani Ambassador in Amman Turki Khan Afridi (Petra photo)

## Jordan signs separate cooperation agreements with India and Pakistan

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Planning Sunday concluded two separate agreements for cultural and scientific cooperation with India and Pakistan, boosting the Kingdom's ties with the two Asian nations.

The agreement with India covers cooperation between New Delhi and Amman in the fields of science, education, culture, information, tourism, archaeology, sports and youth.

The agreement provides for the two sides to upgrade their cooperation through their respective scientific research institutions,

exchange visits by scholars and researchers and exchange publications. The two sides pledged to encourage their respective universities and higher educational institutions to exchange visits by professors and teachers, make available scholarships and specialists to offer teaching services to each other.

They will also cooperate in such fields as literature, cinema, music and plastic art. In addition they will encourage visits by artists and cooperate in matters related to libraries, museums,

radio and television, the press, tourism, youth and sports affairs. Ministry of Planning Secretary General Safwan Al Tal signed the accord for Jordan while the Indian ambassador in Amman, G. Singh, signed for his country.

The agreement with Pakistan, which was signed by Dr. Tal and the Pakistani ambassador to Jordan, Tariq Khan Afridi, covers similar fields of cooperation.

In scientific fields, the two sides will exchange visits by scholars. In education, universities from both sides will send profes-

sors to teach in each others facilities and will offer each other scholarships for students.

In culture, the two sides agreed to cooperate in the fields of literature, music, art and the cinema and to facilitate visits by writers and artists. They also agreed to help organise cultural and artistic exhibitions.

In addition, Pakistan and Jordan will cooperate in tourism, archaeological excavations, restoration of ancient sites and will help each other in youth and sports fields.

## SSC expects to benefit from investment projects

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) expects to collect JD 26 million in revenues in 1991 from its JD 400 million investments in various economic and development projects in Jordan, according to SSC Director General Mohammad Al Saqqaf.

Out of this revenue, JD 20 million will be needed to cover the corporation's obligations and expenses for the year, leaving a surplus of JD 6 million, said Mr. Saqqaf in a lecture to the workers of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC) Saturday.

The SSC's investments are in industry, agriculture, housing and banks, which ensure profits that could be reinvested in other projects to bring in more revenues for the SSC and its beneficiaries, Mr. Saqqaf said.

Revenues from investments increase each year as the number of beneficiaries covered by the SSC law grows, Mr. Saqqaf said.

At present, the SSC law, introduced in 1980, covers 600,000 beneficiaries who are entitled to old age pension, compensation and treatment for occupational injuries, he said.

Among the SSC's priorities, said Mr. Saqqaf, is the application of a health insurance programme for all beneficiaries. A study is underway for this project and it is hoped that a full report will be submitted to the SSC's board of the directors before the end of 1991, Mr. Saqqaf said.

He said that the SSC planned to open new offices in different regions to provide speedy service



Mohammad Saqqaf

to the public. In addition, work is under way to facilitate the organisation's administrative and financial work by installing a computer system that will provide data and help decision-makers and planners.

According to Mr. Saqqaf, the SSC currently pays monthly pensions to 11,500 families and a total of 143,500 have already received a lump sum compensation at the end of their services while 64,000 workers have so far received compensation and per diem payments after incurring occupational injuries.

Since 1980 the SSC spent JD 84 million on compensations, salaries and treatment, Mr. Saqqaf added.

But, he said the burdens and responsibilities are also increasing each year. He said that the SSC faces the prospect of adding 700 to 900 new pensioners to its lists each year and pays compensation for occupational injuries to some 800 workers annually.

## New security court to be set up

By Ahmad Kreishan  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Efforts are under way to set up the state security court in accordance with recently disclosed government plans, informed sources said Sunday.

The new court, which is to have both civilian and military judges and prosecutors, will examine all cases pertaining to the security of the country and its citizens, according to the sources, who requested anonymity.

They said that the new court would be temporarily housed at the present Military Court in Marka until a permanent site is found. The new court will serve as a substitute for the present military court, the sources said.

Regarding members of the clandestine terrorist group calling themselves Holy Fighters in the Name of God and the Prophet Mohammad's Army, the sources said that their case would be the first to be examined by the state security court, whose sessions will be held in public.

A special committee charged with supervising the creation of the court is expected to hold meetings in the coming two days to finalise details concerning the establishment of the court, its system and terms of reference. It will also name the chairman of the court, his assistants, the prosecutors and other officers. In addition, the committee has been charged with defining the nature

and type of cases to be examined by the state security court.

Last Thursday, the government announced the arrest of the clandestine group but did not disclose the size of its membership.

A statement said that the group was responsible for a series of incidents, including two car bomb attacks in which a policeman and a 12-year-old girl were seriously injured and had to have their legs amputated.

The government statement said that the group members were found to be in possession of automatic rifles, hand grenades and explosives. The group was plotting to carry out further attacks on Jordanian and foreign personalities, businesses and organisations, the statement said.

## Committee studies bedouins' demand for land in north

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government is moving to settle issues pertaining to the use of land by bedouin tribes and the Jordanian Armed Forces in the northern, northeastern and eastern regions of the Kingdom.

Minister of State Jamal Al Khreisha said in a statement that the Council of Ministers had set up a committee to look into long-standing requests by the tribes to possess state-owned land. The tribes had been using the land for farming purposes for decades but had been sharing it with the Armed Forces, which conducted various activities on the lands. The tribes demand that the lands they had been using for farming be turned over to them for their sole use and that they be allowed to register these lands in

their own names, preventing any activities on them by the Armed Forces, according to informed sources.

"In accordance with the government policy statement and in a bid to respond to the numerous demands and requests put to the government by a number of Parliament members during their debate of the policy statement, and also in favourable response to the numerous requests by the bedouin tribes in connection with these lands, the prime minister, Mr. Taber Masri has set up a ministerial committee to examine this issue and submit recommendations and proposals to the government," Mr. Khreisha said.

He said that the committee, which is chaired by Minister of Finance Basel Jaraneh, comprises ministers of labour, municipal

and rural affairs and the environment, interior, agriculture and ministers of state.

He said that the committee would be helped in its task by the following: the commander of the badia and border police corps, a representative of the army headquarters and the director of the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre.

"The group will have to study the case in all its aspects and submit final solutions to end the long-standing problem of these lands in a manner that would be satisfactory to the local inhabitants, ensuring their rights and safeguarding public interest at the government," Mr. Khreisha noted.

He said that the government would not make the next move in this concern before receiving and assessing the committee's report.

## Jordan receives assurances Gulf expatriates won't be expelled

By P.V. Vivekanand  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has received definite indications that Kuwait or any of the other Gulf Arab states will not expel a massive number of Jordanian and Palestinian workers, according to highly informed sources.

"The government has been in touch with the concerned authorities over the issue through various channels, including direct diplomatic contacts and through Arab and other friendly countries, as well as the United Nations and the Arab League," said a senior official source. He did not identify the countries involved, but indicated that the Sultanate of Oman had played a key role in the affair.

"The outcome of the contacts has been positive, and we have every reason to believe that neither Kuwait nor any other Gulf state will carry out any massive expulsions of Jordanians and Palestinians," added the source, who preferred anonymity.

Foreign Minister Abdullah Ensour told reporters on July

14 that he had received scarce and unofficial information that "there is no Kuwaiti intention to deport our citizens en masse."

The sources, who spoke to the Jordan Times Saturday, would not confirm or deny whether Jordan has received any official communique from Kuwait that no expulsions would be carried out. But, one of the sources said, "it is very definite that there is no going to be any such deportations from Kuwait or any other Gulf Arab country."

The affirmation comes against the backdrop of fears that Kuwait and other Gulf states were moving towards expelling nationals of countries which were perceived as supporters of Iraq in the Gulf crisis.

Reports from Kuwait had also spoken of government plans not to renew the work and residence permits of Jordanians, Palestinians, Yemenis and Sudanese.

Official sources estimate that over 150,000 Jordanian passport-holders remain in Kuwait; about 22,000 of them residents of the Israeli-

occupied territories who possess temporary Jordanian passports.

According to an official quoted by Reuters, 269,744 Jordanians — including West Bankers holding temporary Jordanian passports — returned to Jordan between Aug. 2 — the day of the Iraqi invasion — and July 15.

The total number of Jordanians and Palestinians — including holders of Egyptian, Syrian and Lebanese travel documents — in the Gulf states was around 800,000 at the beginning of 1990. About half of them were estimated to be in Kuwait.

A few hundred Jordanian passport-holders have been expelled by the Kuwaiti authorities across the border to Iraq in the past few weeks.

International relief organisations have said that all indications were of a regular flow of hundreds of expelled Iraqis, Jordanians and Palestinians as well as stateless Arabs (bedouin) to Iraq from Kuwait every week. But the total number of the expelled in the past three weeks was less than 2,000.

## Jordanian party demands PLO participation in peace talks

By Mariam M. Shabih  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In the wake of ongoing attempts to bring Israel to the negotiating table with Arab governments, a left-wing Jordanian party has voiced objections to the peace proposals put forth by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

"Any proposals that do not include the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in any talks about the future of the Palestinians are not acceptable," said Secretary General of the Jordanian People's Democratic Party (JPDP) Tayseer Al Zibri.

At the second anniversary rally of the party, held at the Professional Association Complex, Mr. Zibri and other speakers told supporters that surrender to American and Israeli dictates would not be

acceptable to a democratic Jordan.

"If the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, decides on who it wants in a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and if it agrees on the concept in principle, then we will support that. If not, we will not accept that a Palestinian delegation will be picked by Israel," Mr. Zibri said.

"Conditions for peace cannot be imposed or it will not be peace, but a dictate," he told a cheering crowd of about 500, mostly young people.

While Mr. Zibri and other speakers at the rally accepted a land for peace solution on the basis of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, all said that Mr. Baker's proposal should include the PLO in one form or another.

Representing the eight-member Democratic Bloc in Parliament, Faris Al Nabulsi said that the peace proposals without a PLO presence were "no peace talks."

"These peace proposals are a politics of surrender," he said, echoing the general mood of Islamist, leftist and pan-Arab parties in Jordan. "There should be no end to the economic embargo on Israel while it occupies our lands and there is no discussion of negotiating the status of the capital of the Palestinian state-Jerusalem."

While other speakers, such as Arab Nationalist Bahjat Abu

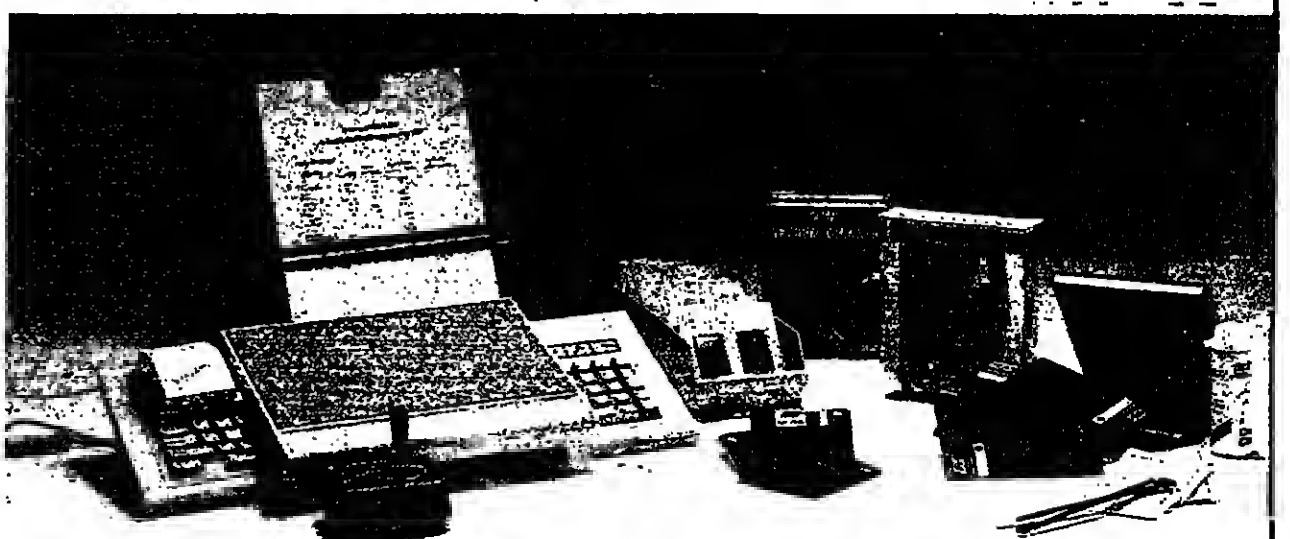
Gharbieh, urged Jordanians to protect national unity and democratic principles, no speaker suggested viable alternatives to the peace process.

The JPDP is a member of the Jordanian Arab Nationalist Democratic Alliance (JAN-DA) which is an umbrella organisation for both pan-Arab and leftist parties in Jordan. The founders of the JPDP were once prominent members of a Palestinian party the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). After the Jordanian government decision to politically and economically disengage itself from the West Bank, the founders of the JPDP were among the first to follow up on the decision by creating a new and separate Jordanian Party.

Like the Palestinian party, the JPDP is a Marxist-Leninist party. They distinguish themselves from some other leftist parties in Jordan in that they have in principle accepted the existence of the state of Israel and call for a two-state solution, one Arab and one Jewish on the land of Palestine.

But the JPDP, like other leftist and pan-Arab parties, has been torn in its stand towards the latest rounds of peace proposals, feeling that any peace in which Israel can decide who it will negotiate with is equivalent to a Middle Eastern version of a Treaty of Versailles.

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## WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

### EXHIBITION

★ Aircraft exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.

### FILM

★ French film entitled "Parole de flic" at the French Cultural Centre — 8:00 p.m.



## Jordan Times

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### Weekly Political Pulse

## Are we prepared for the peace conference?

IT LOOKS like now the world has really something going for the peace process in the Middle East. With the differences between the parties on the conference idea fast ironed out and the last touches put on the projected peace conference, the stage is set at last for talks between the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

So far so good. Yet the problem may very well lie in the two tier negotiations envisaged by the U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's formula. Under this system of anticipated negotiations, the direct talks between the Arab capitals and Tel Aviv are bound to take the limelight of that peace parties between the two sides, leaving the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations way behind. The formula devised by Washington to separate the Palestinian case per se from the other Arab-Israeli disputes is indeed ingenious but troublesome just the same. What if the Arab governments negotiations with Israel really move full speed ahead as projected but leave behind the Palestinian talks dragging way behind? If such a situation does indeed develop whether by intention or otherwise, then what the parties may end up having is something reminiscent of the Camp David talks where direct Egyptian Israeli issues and conflicts were resolved but the Palestinian question left behind for some kind of follow-up negotiations. It is taken for granted that the thorny matter of the Palestinian problem is infinitely more complex than the other dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflicts. Accordingly there is every reason to conclude that the direct Arab Israeli talks will succeed but that the Palestinian situation will remain unresolved unless something is done to connect the two tier peace talks in spite of the formal

disconnection that was made part of the main features of the peace conference negotiations. It should not be too difficult to make the success of one part of the negotiations contingent on the success of the other, just like it is prudent to make the success of any Jordanian-Israeli talks dependent on the success of the negotiations between Syria and Israel. In fact that was part of the Syrian and Jordanian strategy all along and there is no reason now to divorce one from the other.

Having said all that, there is no doubt the momentum of the Arab capitals negotiations with Tel Aviv would have a real impact on the Palestinian talks with Israel. Given the fact that the PLO's fortunes have diminished considerably in the wake of the Gulf war and the defeat of its forces in southern Lebanon at the hands of the Lebanese army, it has become more vulnerable to pressure and intimidation than before. The best Palestinian bet under such a scenario is to coordinate efforts with Amman and pool all its resources with it. Sharing the responsibility for holding talks with Israel could very well provide the basis and the context for optimum results for both peoples. The idea of forming a joint negotiating team is one sure way to give expression to the principle of forging a common strategy in the upcoming negotiations. In this vein even the 1983 decision to break all legal and administrative relations between the East and West Banks needs to be reviewed and revised in order to give added credence to the commonality of interests between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples. Such decisions will not be easy to take as they may suggest a reversal of previous judgments that frankly did not stand

the test of time. Otherwise there is every risk that the Palestinian case may get shelved for some futuristic pursuits that may or may not bear fruit.

Given the avowed designs of Tel Aviv on the West Bank, Israel will endeavour to do everything to keep the broader Arab-Israeli conflict separated from the Palestinian problem in order to facilitate even further the implementation of its grand schemes in the region. There is no indication as yet that the Jordanian-Palestinian preparatory discussions have been directed into the direction of forging such a commonality of positions and the harmonisation and synchronisation of negotiating stands. As long as the overall interests of the two peoples are put before every other consideration, there is no reason to prevent such an objective from becoming a fact of life on the Jordanian-Palestinian arena.

If as publicly proclaimed the conference on the Middle East will be convened in one or two months there is little time left to plan Arab strategy. Last minute consultation obviously would not do. Otherwise the negotiations between the Arab and Israeli side would become a free-for-all phenomenon with each party attempting to extricate the best deal for itself in isolation from the other parties. It would not be such a bad idea to experiment with a mock conference conducted by all the interested Arab parties in anticipation of the real thing. Only by proper preparation for the actual talks in a model forum would the Arab side be able to maintain harmony in its ranks and succeed in outguessing the eventual arguments of the Israeli side.

By Walid Sadi

## Going the full length

ONE DOES not have to indulge in any nerve-wracking exercise to realise that the focal issue at this point in time in the ongoing efforts to bring about Middle East peace talks is not inasmuch as Palestinian representation as the acceptance of the principle of land in exchange for peace. For it is clear for Israel that any involvement of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) will lead only to further consolidation of the Arab insistence on the return of territory. That is, of course, not to say that "non-PLO" Palestinians from the occupied territories — if some could be found of course — are prone to accept any less than the return of land. But, it appears that the Israeli thinking is on a different direction. For one thing, the Israelis seem to believe that negotiating with the Palestinians directly under its occupation will give them an additional leverage in applying pressure to settle for less, if only because the residents of the occupied territories have been choking under the occupation and will welcome a diluted solution as the bottom line. On the other hand, goes the Israeli thinking, the Palestinians in the diaspora are not under any direct pressure from the oppression that prevails in the occupied territories and hence they can hold out for the realisation of all Palestinian and Arab demands.

Such an Arab conclusion of the Israeli approach to peace talks has been on the cards for years. But it assumes graver significances at this phase, when it appears that peace talks are going to take place if only because the Bush administration seems determined to push for a solution.

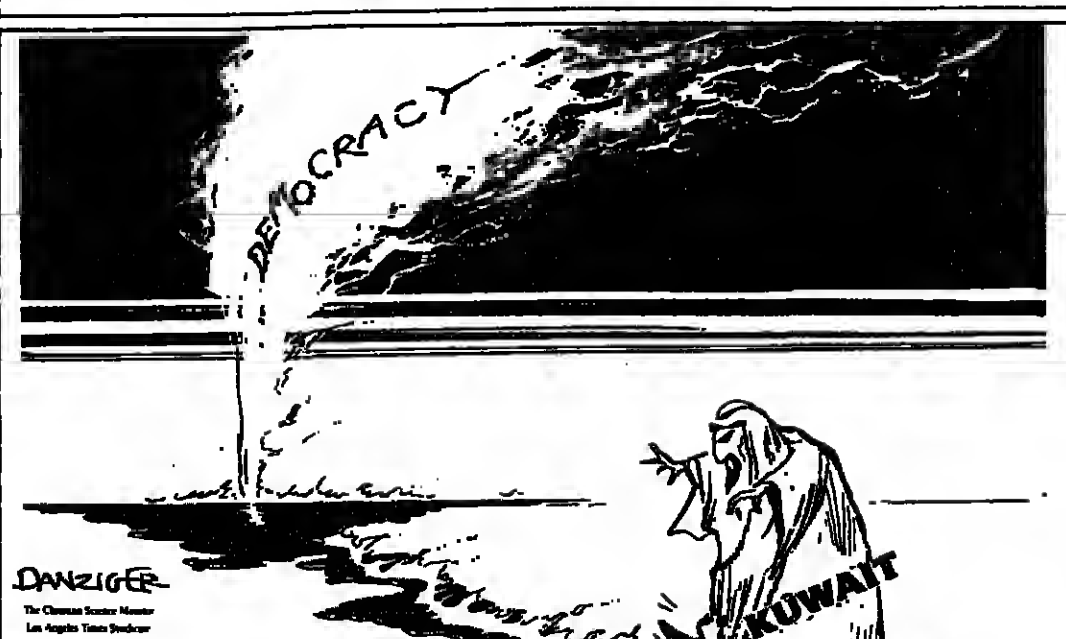
Now, we do not know for sure the envisaged shape and nature of the solution that is expected or even espoused by Washington. And it is impossible to believe that the U.S. is keeping itself away from that particular aspect and has left it to the parties directly involved to thrash out solutions to the various dimensions of the Middle East conflict.

At the same time, there is little doubt that the final objective that the U.S. has promised the Arab side is indeed the return of Arab territories by Israel. Not in so many words perhaps, but, as far as the Arabs are concerned, the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 definitely means Israel relinquishing the territories it occupied in the 1967 war. So what we have here is an American promise of a definite objective coupled with Israeli moves to predetermine the outcome of peace talks. Not exactly a very strange combination as far as diplomatic negotiations go, but what instils uneasiness is the dismal American record in applying pressure on Israel when pressure is needed. Let us hope that the Bush administration realises and is prepared to go the full length for the sake of peace and justice in a region long plagued with violence and bloodshed.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i daily Sunday accused the United States and Israel of hatching a real plot against Syria similar to that which was directed against Iraq and said that the U.S.-Israeli alliance seems determined to destroy the Syrian military strength as it did to that of Iraq. Commenting on a denial by U.S. ambassador to Israel that the U.S. administration had given Syria assurances about Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories, the paper said that such development was meant to embarrass Syria and to force it to change its position with regard to the Baker plan. Once the Syrians change their position, they will be accused of obstructing the peace process, something which Washington would find as a pretext to adopt an open aggressive attitude towards Syria prior to destroying its military machinery, the paper noted. It is unimaginable that Damascus might have fabricated what the U.S. president had promised it about the pullout of Israeli troops and one can only believe that the U.S. administration is going back on its promise, an attitude that might also materialise in the promise to implement U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, the paper noted. It said by accepting the Baker plan, the Syrians forced the U.N.-Israeli alliance to come out into the open and show their real skin and true intentions. The U.S.-Israeli position can only be understood by the recent claims by Israeli and American leaders that the Syrians possess nuclear rockets that could destroy Israel, the paper continued. It said in the light of the ambassador's announcement, one cannot rule out an imminent U.S.-Israeli aggression on Syria, something which ought to drive the Arab regimes to form a united stand and collectively face the looming danger.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily drew the attention of the tourism authorities to give due attention to the ancient city of Petra which, he said is neglected and not in a position to draw tourists. As China takes pride in its great wall and Egypt in its pyramids Jordan should feel proud that it is home for a grand heritage and sites of ancient civilisations like the rose city carved from the rocks in Petra, said Fakhr Kawa in his column Sunday. The writer said he visited the ancient city but was surprised to see that the site was neglected, no repair to its damaged parts was going on and it needed lighting to help guide tourists to their destination. The writer said he was indeed distressed to see that the most important Jordanian tourist attraction in a shameful condition, lacking basic services for the tourists and discouraging people from visiting the ancient site. Kawa urged the Ministry of Tourism to arrange for cleaning up the ancient site, setting up essential services, like tourist offices and stalls to sell various goods for the visitors. He also urged the ministry to install a sound and light system for the benefit of the tourists, thus transforming Jordan in word and deed into a tourist country, attracting visitors from around the world.



## Flames still burn in Gulf

By Charles J. Hanley

The Associated Press

ONE YEAR AGO, on the quiet fringe of Geneva, Arab sheikhs gathered in a plush Swiss hotel to shape a new world order for oil. Off in a distant desert, 45-tonne battle tanks were rumbling into position, awaiting an order of a different kind.

The rest of the world, unsuspecting, was looking elsewhere those lazy days of July 1990, towards the booming U.S. stock market, or the bombastic Boris Yeltsin, or the beaches and backwoods of vacation season.

Then, on Aug. 2, lightning struck. The Iraqi army invaded Kuwait and stunned the world, shaking it awake from a midsummer dream of peace after a long cold war.

Weeks of crisis followed. Nations stood united as never before, the U.S. military unleashed its awesome might, and in the end an aggressive Third World power was beaten back.

The upheaval in the Gulf enhanced America's global role and rejuvenated the United Nations. It may even have helped clear a path towards settling the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But after 12 months of invasion, standoff, war and cease-fire, flames still rage in the Gulf, and the map remains cluttered with uncertainties.

For one, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, with half his army intact continues to hold power in Baghdad. For another, more than 40,000 U.S. troops are still deployed close to Iraq. For a third, oil flames and oil afloat still pose perils in the Gulf.

A fourth great uncertainty lies buried in the desert sands, in nameless, numberless graves.

The U.S. Defence Department reported 148 Americans killed in action. But the full human cost of invasion, counterattack and civil war may never be known. Greenpeace estimates up to 200,000 Iraqis and 5,000 Kuwaitis died.

Among all the unknowns a year after Iraq tried to annex its wealthy neighbour, veteran observers sound sure of one thing: The crisis and its climax have not ushered in a new period of stability and goodwill in the Mideast.

"This 'new world order,' putting right to wrong, having the lion sleep with the lamb — that baloon is going to be deflated very quickly," Kamel Abu Jaber of the Jordan Institute for Middle East Studies predicted in an interview.

The lion turned loose a year ago was the Iraqi army's Republican Guard, whose tanks took over Kuwait within hours, chasing Emir Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah and his "despotic, corrupt" ruling family into exile in Saudi Arabia.

Their quarrel was rooted in money — big money. The Iraqis

said they lost billions of petrodollars when Kuwaiti overproduction drove down oil prices. They were embittered, too, by the Emir's demand for repayment of Kuwaiti billions that bankrolled Iraq's war with Iran in the 1980s.

Six days before the invasion, at the Geneva meeting, Kuwait had agreed to abide by OPEC quotas. But Iraq wasn't satisfied.

Kuwait's crown prince and President Saddam's chief lieutenant then met for urgent talks in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, July 31. Early the next morning, with nothing resolved, the Iraqi stormed off. And at 2 a.m. on Thursday, Iraqi T-72 tanks punched south towards Kuwait City.

More than settling oil accounts, the conquest settled a long-held Iraqi territorial claim over all Kuwait. It became Iraq's "19th province." But Iraqi control lasted only 210 days. In a furious six-week war, an Arab-Western alliance led by a half-million U.S. troops drove the badly mauled Iraqis from the tiny emirate.

For Kuwait, the five months since have been a trying time. The retreating Iraqis set fire to 650 Kuwaiti oil wells, and more than 400 still burn, spreading a hellish pall hundreds of kilometres. In the Gulf below, vast oil spills from the war's last days — an estimated 125 million gallons — have spread down the coastline, inflicting damage still untold.

Land mines litter the landscape. Tens of thousands of Kuwaitis have not come home from exile. The devastated economy lies moribund.

Politically, the restored Kuwaiti oligarchy has embarrassed its allies with its harsh retribution against Iraq collaborators, and has disappointed home-grown reformers with only a halfhearted promise of distant elections. The sheikhs and sultans of other Gulf states seen even less inclined to liberalise their family regimes.

In Iraq, President Saddam declared July 17 that his one-party state would soon embrace "pluralism." Meanwhile, his regrouped army, unimpeded by the Desert Storm allies, crushed uprisings by Iraq's Kurds and Shiite Muslims.

That Western inaction looked to some like tacit support for President Saddam against secessionists. The State Department's former Mideast chief, Richard Murphy, doubts that is the U.S. attitude. "But our policy has to be to support the integrity of Iraq as it has been created in post-World War I times," he told an interviewer.

Beyond the Gulf, the crisis sent human tides of refugees — perhaps three million — flooding across the Middle East.

As many as 800,000 Yemenis living in Saudi Arabia were dispossessed and driven across the

border to Yemen because its government refused to join the anti-Iraq coalition. Jordan suffered similarly for supporting Iraq, and many there remain bitter.

Mohammad Abdul Rahman Khalifa, a leader of Jordan's fundamentalist and politically potent Muslim Brotherhood, says he told President Saddam to his face the Kuwait invasion was wrong. But the American intervention, Khalifa says, "was nothing more than a new crusader war against the Arabs."

"One year after Aug. 2, 1990 the Arab World is still deeply divided," says a prominent Egyptian analyst, ex-diplomat Tahseen Bashir.

"Saddam Hussein committed the Islamic crime of 'fitna,' deep sedition, by splitting the Arab soul from within," Mr. Bashir said in an interview. "He put us in the position of having to rely on the West to retrieve Kuwait from him."

America can win genuine Arab gratitude only by leading Israel to the bargaining table, he said.

The crisis loosened the Arab-Israeli logjam. Syria, a Desert Storm ally, is newly flexible on negotiating approaches. The Palestine Liberation Organisation, in disarray because it supported President Saddam, is fading into the background. And U.S. President Bush has announced to Israel that "the time has come" for peace.

Now the world watches the postwar performance of the United Nations, which acted with dazzling swiftness, from the Aug. 6 resolution that clamped an embargo on Iraq, to the Nov. 29 ultimatum giving it six weeks to leave Kuwait.

Now, will the United Nations eliminate Iraq's nuclear capability, whatever the cost? Will it halt nuclear proliferation elsewhere? Will it rein in conventional arms sales in the Mideast?

Other questions look back, not forward. "Why didn't anybody do something to prevent this in the first place?" veteran U.N. troubleshooter Brian Urquhart asks, speaking of Iraq's resort to arms in a neighbourhood quarrel.

And other hard questions in Washington look back still further: Why did the United States quietly support Iraq in the late 1980s?

Seventy years ago, after World War I, the British convinced President Woodrow Wilson it was America's destiny to establish a Middle East protectorate. But the U.S. Senate resisted.

Now, in the age of rapid deployment, America sounds ready for a Wilsonian destiny. And the Mideast still looks dangerous, a place where "threats can arise suddenly, unpredictably and from unexpected quarters" — as Mr. Bush pointed out just a year ago, on Aug. 2, when the startling news first flashed in from the Gulf.

## Unease in Kuwait

By Neil MacFarquhar

The Associated Press

KUWAIT CITY — One year after the Iraqi invasion that began a brutal occupation and five months after the war that ended it, Kuwaitis have a collective case of the jitters.

They are having to face unsettling economic, political and social issues that had been soothed for decades by the balm of oil wealth.

That wealth now is going up in the smoke of burning wells and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, though less of a threat, remains across the border.

Kuwait's military is in disarray and no coherent defence strategy has been devised.

"Security, external and internal, is the major issue," said Suleiman Muttawa, the former planning minister. "Whoever does not feel insecure is kidding himself."

Hundreds of thousands of Kuwaitis spent the occupation and war abroad. Most have stayed there.

Because of the insecurity, relatively few of those at home turned in their weapons as required by the martial law rules in effect until July 1.

Anger about the invasion has focused on kicking out non-Kuwaitis whose leaders supported Iraq: Jordanians, Yemenis, Sudanese and Palestinians.

More than 1,000 remain in jail and hundreds face trial on collaboration charges, under the same judicial system and legal code that produced 29 hanging verdicts in June.

In response to an outcry from countries whose forces liberated Kuwait, Crown Prince Saad Abdullah Al Sabah commuted those sentences to life in prison. Palestinians had thrived in Kuwait. About 150,000 remain, but fewer than one-third are expected to stay after receiving the severance pay they have been promised.

"They've always been a threat, but before we didn't have the power to do anything," said Khalifa Al Kharafi, a member of the National Council. "Who could kick out 400,000 Palestinians?"

Officials say replacement workers will be accepted from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and the Indian subcontinent.

Repair of public utilities is nearly complete. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is expected to complete \$400 million worth of non-military reconstruction by year's end.

More than 220 of the 650 oil-well fires have been put out by American crews brought in for the job. Oil production is up to 50,000 barrels a day and will surpass the 150,000 barrels needed for domestic consumption by January.

To deal with its \$22-million bill for the war and an estimated \$14 billion in reconstruction costs, Kuwait is expected to borrow against its foreign investments of at least \$100 billion.

A host of problems wait to be addressed.

The government wants to reduce the prewar population of 2.2

million to 1.2 million so the 600,000 Kuwaitis will account for half. About 800,000 people now live in the emirate.

Kuwait does not have a budget or a fiscal policy. Nothing significant has been done to help business recover.

"There's a problem with the quality of management" and the government lacks experience, said Sheikh Nasser Al Sabah, a senior official from a major branch of the 1,000-member ruling family who was left out of the cabinet.

Opposition leaders are pressing to have the constitution restored. The Emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, suspended it in 1986, dissolved parliament and restricted the press.

He has promised parliamentary elections for October 1992, and recalled the National Council, a consultative body of 50 elected and 25 appointed members that has little power.

Kuwaitis who stayed through the occupation are tired of official incompetence and a "polite" opposition. They learned to cope for themselves and resent the return to the prewar order.

"We thought free Kuwait meant really free, not just free from Saddam," said Bashir Abdul Rida, 25, who was in the resistance.

More than 300 of the best military officers demand that senior commanders resign for failing to organise any real defence against the Iraqis.

"The invasion was a nightmare, a really hard lesson," said Col. Kaif Al Saleh, the navy commander. "Change must come."

## Training Opportunities In The USA For Business, Manufacturing, Service Personnel And Others In Private Sector Enterprises

The Ministry of Planning in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), invites women and men who are Jordanian citizens competent in written and spoken English to apply for short term training that will be useful to private sector businesses.

Training in practical business skills will be provided for up to 6 months at training institutes, universities and businesses in such fields as marketing, management, banking, accounting, computers, production methods, quality control, and more. As an example of the kind of training that is available is the Small Business Management Programme offered by the International Institute for Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Graduate School. The programme was developed for individuals working in private enterprises and includes courses in business planning and management, accounting and information systems, entrepreneurship training and productivity.

Applicants or their employers must contribute to the cost of the training.

USAID training specialists will work with employers and participants to identify the most useful training opportunity within the United States for the individual and the business, and will make all arrangements.

Applicants and employers interested in this opportunity should write in English to:

The Ministry of Planning  
Training Section  
P.O. Box 555  
Amman, Jordan

OR

USAID, Training Office  
P.O. Box 354  
Amman, Jordan



# Wages of childhood

By Katia Sabat

CAIRO, Egypt — Ibrahim Osman is seven. Although primary education is compulsory in Egypt, he has never been to school. Instead he works for Sayed Metwally, the village's mechanic, and earns four Egyptian pounds (US \$1.20) a day. On a good day when clients are feeling generous, he can make a couple of extra pounds in tips. With his 180 pounds (\$54) per month, Ibrahim earns as much as

an adult with a university degree at the beginning of his career. Little wonder that the boy's father prefers to have his son labouring in the mechanic's workshop where he can learn the trade.

As he stands before a cotton field, the mayor of a village in the Nile Delta prays to God for this year's cotton crop to be infested with worms. These pests have to be plucked by hand and killed. For centuries, children have been employed for this task. The

mayor's calculation is a simple one: the more worms there are, the more work there will be for the children. More work means more money for the family.

While it may seem strange for a father to condemn his children to manual labour all their life because they receive no formal education, in many parts of the developing world, as in Egypt, there is a tendency to view children as bread-winners who must help the family and in some sense show their gratitude and "pay" for the privilege of having been brought into the world. This does not mean that parents lack love and affection; it is simply a matter of economics.

Even when children receive the benefit of an education, they must pay back the family, so to speak. Consider the case of Nermin D., who holds a degree in philosophy and is now a university professor. Until the day she married, the young woman regularly gave her father a sum of money.

The same is true of 40-year-old Ahmad F.B., who although married with two children, continues to give his parents 15 pounds (\$4.5) every month, even though they have no need of it. These are just two examples of a system that leaves a large amount of room for abuse. It is a system in which parents are the lords and masters and children are the work-force. But these workers have no rights, no voice and often no pay.

Amina is a classic example of an all too common situation. Since the age of six, Amina, now 21, has worked as a maid in various households in the wealthier parts of Cairo. Sometimes the people were good to her, other times she was beaten and insulted. By now, the girl knows which masters she prefers. "Foreigners," she says immediately. "The French and the Italians are nice, and so are the Russians, although they are generally tight-

fisted. The English are very cold and the Germans are unfriendly. But all of them are alright, they don't beat or insult you. After the foreigners come the Egyptians. There are good and bad people. The people I was with last year made me work from five in the morning to midnight."

No matter how hard she works, Amina never sees a penny of what she earns. Her salary is paid directly to her father. "My father gets the money straight from my employers. That's normal. It is our duty to help our family," she said.

Nevertheless, there came a day when Amina wanted to get married. She needed to save her money for her trousseau and asked her employer to stop giving her father the money and put it into a savings account. "All hell broke loose," she recalls. "My father came with a group of relatives to camp at the door of the building where I worked. He refused to leave unless he received his monthly 'dues.' He claimed I was a fallen woman and that I was going to become a street girl. He was going to have to deal with me, and every one of my uncles, cousins or brothers in law was ready to do the job to safeguard the honour of the family. I gave in. My father took my wages and left."

Amina is the oldest of six brothers and sisters; none of the children has been to school and all of them work either as domestic staff or as trainees in workshops. Every penny they earn goes to their father. The man has also put his two wives to work: it is, in fact a case of institutionalised family slavery. Yet there is nothing in the law to prevent it.

"There is nothing unique about this case," says lawyer Sherif Farouk. "Luckily it is not all that common. Under the law, natural parents have custody of minors. The fact that the father takes all the money is in this context not at all against the law. Not sending



Anwar, 50, shown here with five of his seven children, receives about \$3 a day from each of them when they work in the fields (WNL).

the children to school is against the law, but who is going to bother denouncing that kind of thing? In theory, because she is now of age, Amina could break away from her father's control, but we have seen what happened when she tried. The only thing she can do is go to the police, but that is pretty extreme and there are very few children in our society who would go that far."

Amina's only hope to marry someone who would take the place of her father, someone strong enough to stand up to him.

That was the only way out for Dalwat Abdul Razak. Now 40 years old, she looks back on earlier times as a sort of nightmare. "I got married at 13 with a man of 60 just to get away from my mother," she recalls. "He was very kind and loved me dearly. In fact he treated me as though I were a doll. He used to bathe me and brush my hair. Nevertheless, as a marriage, it was far from ideal for a young girl."

She stretches her arm to reveal a deep scar. "This was the

punishment I got from one of the women I worked for. She burnt me with an iron because I had broken something. I was eight! When your parents force you to work under those conditions, any marriage is preferable."

The luckier children are those from rural families who are sent to work as labourers in the fields. The work is not as gruelling as in the cities and does not automatically exclude school attendance. As a father, Anwar, 50, is fairly typical: the keeper of an orange grove, he has seven children; the oldest is married, but the rest all work in the fields. All the money they earn goes to their father. Three of Anwar's children go to school. Fifteen-year-old Sobhi is in his second year of secondary school, while eight-year-old Bassuni is in his second year of primary school. One of the girls has finished primary school but does not intend to go on with her education. During the school holidays, the children bring in an average of 10 pounds (\$3) per day.

Anwar's family situation illustrates well a general pattern showing that for their first 20 years or so, children are the major contributors to the family's income. Under such conditions it is easy to understand why the government's family planning campaigns have had little effect. Efforts to limit Egypt's galloping population growth — from 55 million, the population is expected to reach 75 million by the year 2000 — have failed. For the vast majority, reducing the number of children amounts to reducing vital income. In a country where pension schemes and other formal systems of guaranteeing subsistence in old age do not exist, parents still count on their numerous progeny to look after them.

"Every child has his chance in life," says Anwar with an optimism he shares with millions of other parents. Trying to convince them that this may not be the case is close to impossible within the current economic context.

"Women have often been ac-

cused of trying to hold on to their men by producing children one after the other," notes gynecologist Fatma Ahmed Mustapha. "This may have had some truth before people become more aware of family planning in the 1980s. These days, women recognise that in terms of the quality of life within the family context and for the future in general, having two or three children is preferable to having a flock of eight, 10 or 12 kids. But some claim that their husbands are responsible. That they are the ones who want large numbers of children and threaten their wives with divorce or more if they do not comply."

"What would I do without children?" asks Anwar. Seeing him surrounded by a bevy of smiling faces, it is easy to understand that they are the source of not only his material, but also his emotional well-being. But what does the future hold for Sobhi, Bassuni, Faiza and the others? This is a question no-one, least of all their father seems to have considered — World News Link.



With more or less kindness, many Egyptian children are thrust into the labour force when other, luckier children start school. Dawlat Abdul Razak, now 40, still bears the physical scars inflicted by employers (WNL).

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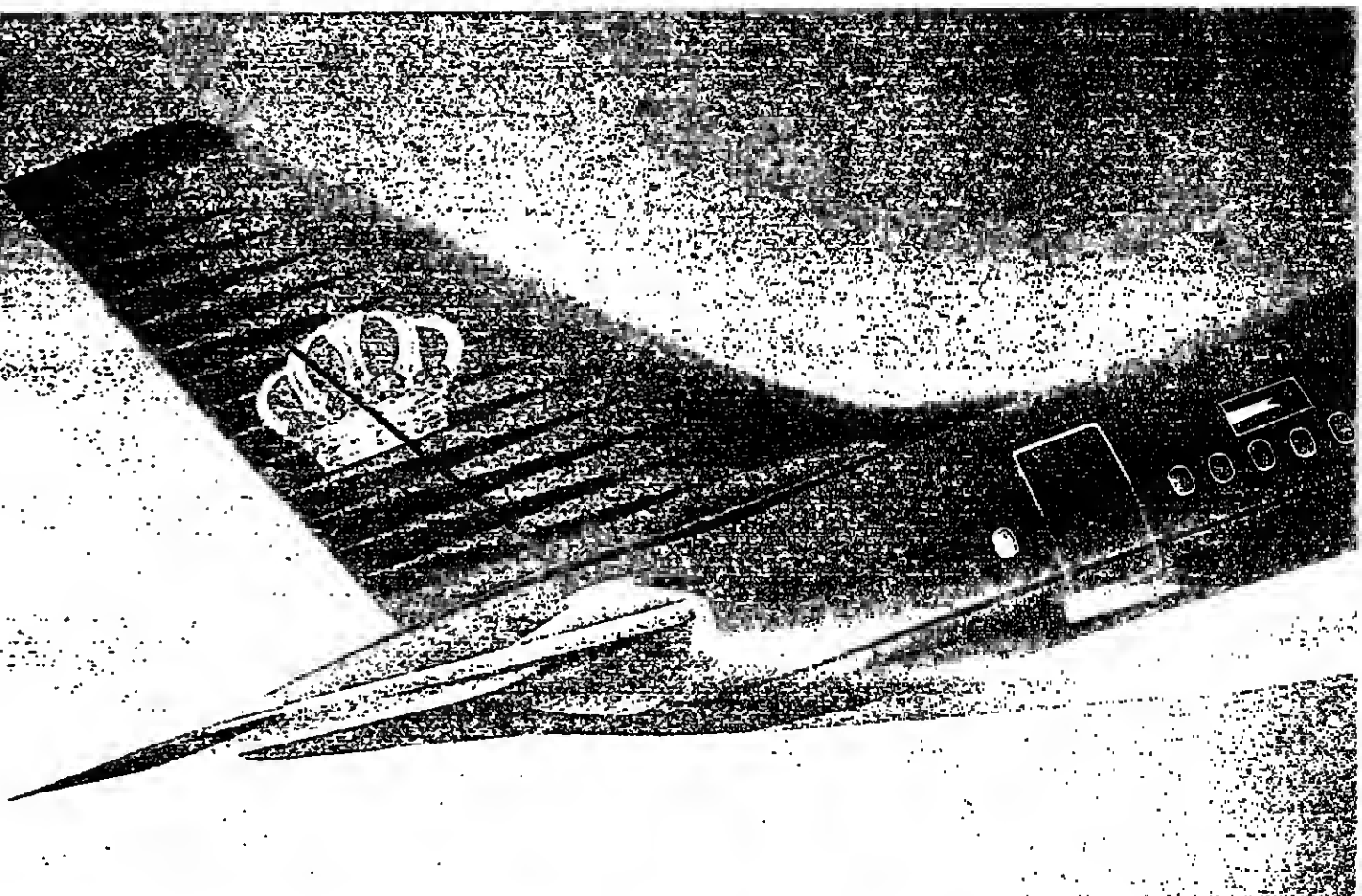
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## Financial Markets

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### Weekly Foreign Exchange Market Summary (July 22-July 26, 1991)

TECHNICAL factors dominated foreign exchange markets during most of last week, as traders awaited the release of U.S. economic data on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, none of which was up to expectations. In a directionless market, dollar rates picked up significantly Monday and again Thursday, but declined during the rest of the week's trading session, ending lower against the mark but higher against the yen and sterling Friday.

After its sharp drop the previous Friday, and contrary to expectations, the dollar recovered Monday on a technical correction as traders covered their positions, thus reaching its highest closing level for the week against the mark at 1.7620 marks to the dollar. Despite the temporary recovery, trading remained subdued as market participants held conflicting views over the U.S. currency's short term direction. Analysts maintained that such a confusion would continue as the dollar consolidates.

A bout of profit-taking on mark long positions took the dollar to a high of 1.7725 marks Tuesday, but the U.S. currency soon dropped as it came under pressure in New York trading from remarks by a White House economic adviser who said that while the U.S. economy was recovering, some regions were lagging behind. His remarks added to investors' confusion over the dollar's direction caused by the American economy's slower than expected recovery and fear of central bank intervention if the dollar rallies again. But as the dollar was already overvalued, its decline was halted by a wave of short covering.

Wednesday witnessed a sharp drop in dollar rates against European currencies taking it to its lowest level of the week at 1.7380 marks to the dollar and 1.6910 dollars to the sterling pound. The drop followed the release of June's Durable Goods Orders in the U.S. revealing a decline by 1.6 per cent, versus market expectations of an 0.9 per cent rise. An added effect came from rekindled expectations over the possibility of a German discount rate increase based on the rise in recent inflation data in Germany. Yen sentiment was hurt, on the other hand, by fears that investigations into the financial scandal involving major Japanese securities houses might reveal the names of the corporations that received illegal compensation from the investment banks and/or the names of politicians who might be involved. The Japanese currency thus fell to its lowest level of the week against the mark, closing at 79.14 yen to the mark.

Technical adjustments coupled with anticipation over second quarter GNP figures for 1991 lifted the dollar Thursday, taking it to its highest levels of the week against the yen and the sterling pound at 138.83 yen to the dollar and 1.6735 dollars to the pound. The adjustment took place despite the release of disappointing money supply figures showing continued sluggishness in growth of the U.S. monetary aggregates.

Friday witnessed an early dollar rise to reach 135.70 yen to the dollar as traders squared positions in anticipation of the release of GNP figures, only to fall again on corporate selling and revived fears of central bank intervention. The decline accelerated in New York as second quarter GNP figures showed an increase of 0.4 per cent, against expectations for a one per cent rise, thus confirming the view that the U.S. economic recovery will be weaker than previously thought and reinforcing speculation over the possibility of another discount rate cut by the Fed, especially in the context of stagnant money supply figures. Revised expectations of higher German interest rates boosted the mark to 1.7310 marks to the dollar and 79.28 yen, after comments from the Bundesbank vice president in which he did not rule out the possibility of a discount rate hike, only to recede after comments from a Bank of Japan official who denied the possibility of a drop in Japan's discount rate to shore up prices on the Tokyo stock market.

Expectations for this week remain mixed, after the dollar failed to drop below support at 1.7300 marks last week. Major factors to watch for in the week ahead are the performance of the Japanese stock market and the re-evaluation of tension in Yugoslavia.

#### New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	19/7/91	26/7/91	Percent Change
Close	Close		
Sterling Pound	1.6945	1.6820	-0.74%
Deutsche Mark	1.7475	1.7440	-0.20%
Swiss Franc	1.5115	1.5227	-0.74%
French Franc	5.9315	5.9340	-0.04%
Japanese Yen	136.41	137.60	-0.086%

#### 150 Per Cent Extra-Currency Interest Rates

Currency	19/7/91	26/7/91	1-Month	1-Year	1-Month	1-Year
U.S. Dollar	5.87	6.62	5.87	6.50		
Sterling Pound	10.81	10.68	11.12	10.75		
Deutsche Mark	6.81	9.18	6.81	9.43		
Swiss Franc	7.75	7.75	7.62	7.68		
French Franc	9.12	9.43	9.50	9.50		
Japanese Yen	7.37	7.21	7.37	6.96		

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding 1.5 million dollars or equivalent

#### Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.666	.668
Sterling Pound	1.1530	1.1588
Deutsche Mark	.3930	.3950
Swiss Franc	.4500	.4523
French Franc	.1155	.1161
Japanese Yen	.4977	.5002
Dutch Guilder	.3468	.3505
Swedish Krona	.1066	.1093
Italian Lira	.8528	.8531
Belgian Franc	.01908	.01918

Per 100

## Sudan faces expulsion from IMF

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan's economy is so sick that even its doctor, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), now says it is untreatable.

The impoverished African state, struggling to keep a toe-hold at the bottom of the world poverty league's lowest division, faces expulsion by its creditors. It is \$1.5 billion behind in repayments to the IMF. World finance ministers may take an unprecedented step and cancel the Khartoum government's membership.

It would be the toughest action the IMF, created in 1911, has taken to bring unruly economies into line.

"I don't think anyone wants to see Sudan expelled, but I expect it to come up for discussion. The economy is in the most awful state," said one Western ambassador.

Sudan's arrears will be on the agenda when the world's finance ministers attend an IMF and World Bank annual meeting in Washington this October.

Sudanese officials are reluctant to discuss the topic. The IMF declared the Khartoum government "uncooperative" and stopped lending it money in 1986.

The officials say the economy,

heavily dependent on producing cotton, grain, and gum Arabic which is used in chewing gum, has been wrecked by years of drought, mismanagement by previous governments and eight years of civil war.

They complain that despite the freeing of fuel and some food prices — steps the IMF normally advocates — the government has yet to receive further help from the fund.

Some Sudanese suspect that the showdown with the IMF is merely an extension of the international isolation they say the United States has engineered against Sudan as punishment for sympathising with Iraq during the Gulf crisis.

Sudan's government, which is closely linked to the Muslim fundamentalist movement, criticised Iraqi aggression against Kuwait but was equally blunt in denouncing the U.S.-led drive to free the emirate.

Its politics have not endeared it to Western donors. Even diplomats with long records of monitoring Third World economies mixed in debt and disaster are exasperated by Sudan.

"All the obvious economic indicators show that this government is charging into the abyss of

economic disaster," said one senior diplomat from a Western country whose government has previously backed Sudan.

But the obvious economic signs are difficult to read from official documents, according to Western experts.

"The figures are pretty much meaningless. It would not surprise me if Sudan's gross domestic product (GDP), for instance, fails to appear in its national documents this year," said one.

What is obvious, both to hard-pressed Sudanese in their dusty potholed streets and to western diplomats in their air-conditioned offices, is that inflation is soaring.

"What we have here would be called hyper-inflation if it were a Latin American economy," said a foreign economist.

"We will never have a crash or a collapse here because that requires a functioning market. There's simply nothing here to collapse," he pointed out.

By Western estimates, inflation was at 110 per cent in April, a rate that could reach 300 per cent by the year end.

"If you ask a plumber or a painter or a mechanic for an estimate for a job here, it's good for 18 hours. Ring him three days later, and the rate's gone up,"

said one businessman.

By common consent, one of the main causes of inflation is the vast amount of excess currency sloshing around the system chasing pitifully few goods.

In an attempt to control inflation, the central bank in May ordered Sudanese to hand in large-denomination banknotes for new ones. It then froze bank accounts to keep money out of circulation.

Similar exercises have worked in other countries, notably Uganda and Nigeria. But in Sudan, it backfired. There were not enough new notes to replace the old ones.

"The effect was one of tremendous panic. People's confidence in the banking system just disappeared," said a foreign banker.

One wealthy Sudanese said he had ignored the currency swap altogether. He makes his money importing spare parts.

"I've got 18 million pounds (about \$1.1 million at the official tourist rate) in old notes under my bed. There have been three coups since independence. I'm waiting for the next one, which will make the old notes legal again," he said.

## German inflation hits 9-year peak

FRANKFURT (R) — The German central bank made its strongest hint to date that interest rates would have to rise again as Germany announced its steepest increase in inflation since 1982.

Hefty tax rises in July boosted west German prices to an annual inflation rate of 4.5 per cent.

Financial analysts said this greatly increased the chances that the powerful, independent central bank would ignore tugging world interest rates and tighten monetary policies in August after its summer holiday break.

The bank's president-designate, Helmut Schlesinger, hinted at a rate rise when he said that German inflation in July had risen much too fast.

"It now seems impossible that we shall drop below four per cent again this year, as I had hoped," said Mr. Schlesinger, who takes over as president of the Bundesbank Wednesday.

He said there were clear arguments for a rise in the bank's 6.5 per cent discount rate, which was "way out of line with market rates."

The central bank said moving the discount rate closer to the nine per cent Lombard emergency financing rate "would not be a restrictive move but the removal of a type of interest rate subsidy."

Consumer prices in west Germany rose 1.0 per cent in July from June and were 1.5 per cent above July 1990 levels, the steepest rise since 1.6 per cent in December 1982.

Government spokesman Dieter Vogel said Bonn was as worried as the Bundesbank about the sharp rise in inflation.

## Poll finds many Soviets still want state control of industry

WASHINGTON (AP) — People in three key Soviet republics favour continued government control of most industries, showing only mild support for transforming the system into a market economy, a Times Mirror survey said Saturday.

"Support for a free-market economy in Russia and other Soviet republics is modest at best and there is little evidence in the research that the Russian public is ready, willing or able to easily adapt to a free-market economy," Times Mirror said.

Fifty-four per cent of those polled in the European part of Russia, 53 per cent in the Ukraine and 76 per cent in Lithuania approved of efforts to establish a free market economy.

However, the slim majority in both Russia and the Ukraine fall within the poll's margin of error. The poll did not cover people who live in the part of Russia that lies in Asia, east of the Ural mountains.

The picture changed dramatically when the questions got specific, such as whether certain industries should be state-controlled or privatised. Then, majorities favoured private ownership only in the area of agriculture.

State or cooperative control of heavy industry was favoured by 79 per cent in Russia, 86 per cent in the Ukraine and 69 per cent in Lithuania. There were also majorities in all three republics against private ownership of the phone system, radio and television, trains and buses, schools and electricity.

Only in Lithuania, which is seeking independence from the Soviet Union, did a clear majority say they favoured changing to a capitalist society, with 29 per cent approving capitalism as found in the United States or Germany and 38 per cent preferring "a modified form of capitalism such as found in Sweden."

Forty per cent of those polled in Russia and 49 per cent in the Ukraine favoured one or the

other form of capitalism. In both republics, 10 per cent held out for status quo communism.

Even in Lithuania, only 20 per cent said banks mainly should be privately owned and 16 per cent said most newspapers should be private.

The survey was based on face-to-face interviews conducted April 15-May 5 with 2,210 people in households selected.

When people were asked to name the most important problem facing their country, economic problems topped the list at 41 per cent among Russians and 40 per cent among Ukrainians.

In Lithuania, achieving independence was named by 52 per cent as the most important problem facing the country.

Twenty-eight per cent of the people polled in Russia and 26 per cent of those in the Ukraine said their greatest worry was the possibility of all-out civil war, putting it in second place behind the economy as a personal concern.

## British firms to explore for minerals in Yemen

SANAA (R) — Yemen has awarded two British firms concessions to explore for minerals, including gold, Sanaa radio has reported.

The radio quoted Ali Jabr Alawi, head of the Mineral Exploration Authority, as saying Cliff Abela Ltd. would explore for gold, silver, lead and zinc in Shabwan and Saadah provinces, south-east and north of Sanaa.

Cliff Abela is 10 per cent owned by oil and mineral exploration firm Cliff Resources PLC and 60 per cent by oil services firm Abela Ltd.

A second British firm, which Mr. Alawi named as Elgon Mining Company, will explore for gold in the Hadramaut province, east of the capital, Mr. Alawi said.

A Soviet company discovered gold in Hadramaut province in the mid 1980s but suspended its operations following disagreement with the former South Yemen authorities.

## Nigeria Airways seeks government assistance

LAGOS (R) — State-run Nigeria Airways described its financial position as precarious and asked the government to absorb a 630 million naira (\$37 million) long-term debt before any privatisation.

Managing Director Jonathan Ibrahim told a government committee on privatisation that six of his company's 16 aircraft were unserviceable or awaiting major repairs. The airline also owed \$35 million to suppliers.

"The airline's financial position has remained precarious even

## Oman wants banks to merge

MANAMA, Bahrain (R) — Oman believes it has too many banks and wants some of them to merge, regional bankers said Saturday.

They said the Central Bank of Oman had discussed the idea with representatives of the 22 local and foreign commercial banks operating in the sultanate.

"There are a larger number of banks in Oman than needed. The central bank is encouraging them to merge to cut expenses, raise efficiency and increase their profitability," one banker said.

Last month's discussions took place at the urging of Oman's Development Council, headed by Sultan Qaboos, which is responsible for economic, financial and development planning.

The banker said the central bank had not so far received a positive response to the merger idea — "banks need time to consider this serious decision."

Meanwhile two Omani banks and two investment firms have won approval to strengthen their financial positions by increasing paid-in capital, a senior official said.

The two investment firms are Mahmoud Ben Mohammad AJ Al Shalman Securities Company Jarwani, the director general of and AJ Alhla Portfolio Securities the Muscat Securities market, Co.

told Reuters by telephone that more banks and firms were considering the move.

The Oman Bank Corporation had already raised its capital to six million riyals (\$15.6 million) from 3.44 million (\$8.9 million) by offering shares to the public, he said.

The other bank, Oman International Bank (OIB), has clearance to increase its paid-in capital to 12 million riyals (\$31.2 million) from 10 million (\$26 million), he said.

The bank plans to offer 1.2 million shares to existing shareholders through a rights issue and 800,000 shares would be offered to the public.

But Gulf bankers say the bank, wholly owned by Omanis, had not acted yet because of problems over its ownership.

"The bank wants to maintain its 100 per cent Omani ownership. But if the bank offered shares to the public some shares could fall into the hands of foreigners in joint Omani investment firms," said one.

The two investment firms are Mahmoud Ben Mohammad AJ Al Shalman Securities Company Jarwani, the director general of and AJ Alhla Portfolio Securities the Muscat Securities market, Co.

## Bahrain posts \$315m balance of payments deficit for last year

MANAMA, Bahrain (R) — Bahrain's balance of payments showed a deficit of 118.7 million dinars (\$315 million) in 1990 compared to a surplus of 70.8 million (\$188 million) in 1989, the Bahrain Monetary Agency said.

The agency, in a report received Sunday, blamed the shortfall mainly on a sharp deterioration in the services, transfers and capital account.

The Gulf crisis which began in August scared away business from the island. But higher oil prices sparked by the crisis improved the trade balance, which showed a 17.9 million dinar (\$45 million) surplus in 1990 compared to a deficit of 113.7 million dinars (\$302 million) in 1989.

Oil exports in 1990 rose to 1.105 billion dinars (\$2.93 billion) from 800.5 million dinars (\$2.123 billion) the previous year. Non-oil exports were worth 300.9 million dinars (\$798 million) against 264 million dinars (\$700 million). Oil imports were worth 627 million dinars (\$1.78 billion) compared to 466.7 million (\$1.23 billion). Non-oil imports jumped to 716 million dinars (\$1.89 billion) in 1990 against 711.5 million (\$1.88 billion) a year ago.

The figures show total oil production in 1990 declined slightly to 15.4 million barrels compared with 15.6 million a year ago. But crude oil refining rose to 90 million barrels in 1990 from 88.8 million.

Gas production also rose in 1990 to 291.1 billion cubic feet compared with 273.1 billion in 1989.

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On Wednesday, July 31 Reverend Salim Sayegh, Bishop of the Latin Church in Amman, will be the main celebrant at a liturgy celebrating the 500th anniversary of the birth of St. Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus. The mass will be celebrated at La Salle Church (Freres' College), Jabel Hussein, at 6:30 p.m. The sermon will be delivered by Rev. Thomas J. Fitzpatrick, S.J., Superior of the Jesuits in Amman, Jordan. Following the liturgy there will be a reception at the Jesuit Centre (down toward the centre of the city from the Freres' College).

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## Yugoslav jets fire on Croatian forces

### Croatia agrees on ceasefire

**BELGRADE (AP)** — Croatia's ruling council endorsed a call by Yugoslavia's presidency for a ceasefire in the republic, the state news agency reported Sunday, but there appeared to be no progress in establishing a truce.

Saturday, a Yugoslav Air Force jet fired on Croatian forces and Croatian police battled federal tanks and troops.

The council, in a meeting led by Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, cited the "escalation of conflict and the numerous victims" for its decision and said any truce should be monitored by European Community (EC) observers.

Efforts to arrange a ceasefire in Croatia have been bogged down as Croatia demands that the army return to its barracks before the republic demobilises its militia. The presidency has demanded demobilisation of all militias first.

Saturday's aerial attack marked an escalation of combat in Croatia, where 10 people were reported killed in an overnight assault by about 200 troops and 11 tanks on the town of Glina, south of the Croatian capital of Zagreb.

The jet rocketed Croatian forces near Ilok, in eastern Croatia, after they had shot at the plane while it was on patrol. No casualties were reported.

About 50 people have been killed in three days of fighting involving Croatian police, ethnic Serb militias and the federal army. More than 200 people have been killed in Croatia and Slovenia since the republics declared independence on June 25.

By Saturday evening Croatia was reported to be mostly quiet. Tanjog said at least 24 people died in Friday's fighting. The 10 reported killed in the overnight assault on Glina apparently were in addition to the 24.

Also Saturday, Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis told reporters in Dubrovnik that the European Community, meeting Monday in Brussels, would likely decide to send a three-member group back to Yugoslavia.

That could signal the beginning of a diplomatic effort to end the fighting in Croatia, similar to that which led to a ceasefire in Slovenia.

The EC group arranged a ceasefire on July 8 between the army and Slovenian forces.

Because of Croatia's explosive ethnic mix, such a mission would likely be much more difficult in Croatia.

But, Mr. De Michelis said, "I think a compromise will be found."

"The first condition for a political solution is a ceasefire.... But no one wants to make a first step," he said.

Croatia accuses the army, whose officer corps is predominantly Serbian, of siding with ethnic Serbs in Croatia. The army says it only tries to keep Serbs and Croats apart.

Ethnic Serbs make up about 10 per cent of Croatia's 6 million people. There is a long history of enmity between the two ethnic groups.

Croatian Deputy Interior Minister Milan Brezak charged Saturday that the army coordinated its attack on Glina with ethnic Serb militias.

There was no direct statement from the army, but Mr. Brezak said that in a meeting with Croatian officials the army had denied the charge.

Later, Belgrade TV showed footage of a Serbian militia leader, widely known as Capt. Dragan, in Glina.

Tanjog quoted him as saying that the fighting was mostly over in the area and that the biggest formations of Croats had been pushed out.

An official of the Croatian Defence Ministry who spoke on condition of anonymity said the attackers apparently were army reservists using tanks. He did not have details of those killed, but they were most likely Croatian police and gendarmes.

Croatian officials also reported that the nearby village of Cuntic, with about 70 houses, was on fire, and that the Croat village of Hrvatska Kostajnica was cut off from other ethnic Croat areas.

Croatian radio reported Saturday attacks on the village of Principovac and Opatovac, about 140 miles east of Zagreb. Four people were wounded.

## Gorbachev loses closest ally as Yakovlev resigns

**MOSCOW (AP)** — Mikhail Gorbachev lost his closest ally and architect of his revolutionary glasnost policy Saturday when Alexander Yakovlev resigned as a presidential adviser.

The move could deprive Mr. Gorbachev during his summit Tuesday and Wednesday with U.S. President George Bush of the man responsible for helping him launch his dramatic reforms. Besides Mr. Yakovlev, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze resigned in December.

Mr. Yakovlev, 67, has been Mr. Gorbachev's side since the Soviet leader came to power in 1985 but he has increasingly aligned himself more with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and other radical reformers.

Although Mr. Yakovlev did not explain why he was quitting Gorbachev's team, the reason may be disagreement over a Yeltsin decree to bar Communists from political activity in government offices, factories and state-run businesses.

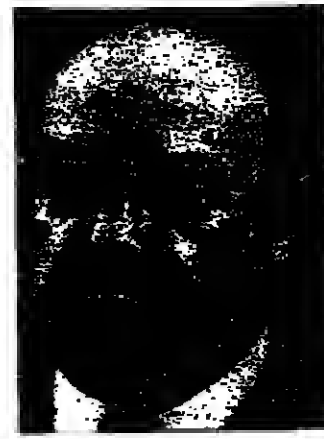
Mr. Gorbachev Friday joined other Communist leaders during a Central Committee meeting in blasting the decree. On Saturday, Mr. Yakovlev defended it.

"It's a normal approach," Mr. Yakovlev told reporters, referring to Mr. Yeltsin's order. "We are talking about a law-based state and everyone should be treated the same."

A month ago, Mr. Yakovlev and Mr. Shevardnadze helped found a pro-democracy coalition that may oppose the Communist Party.

Mr. Yakovlev gave a surprisingly sharp answer Saturday when asked if Mr. Gorbachev could become the leader of the pro-democracy coalition. "No," was Mr. Yakovlev's reply. He refused to elaborate.

He would not say Saturday if he was quitting the Communist Party, although reports circulated a few weeks ago that he would.



Alexander Yakovlev

Mr. Yakovlev, a one-time Soviet ambassador to Canada, has been Mr. Gorbachev's top strategist and confidante on democratic reforms since March 1985.

"I have given a letter of resignation," Mr. Yakovlev was shown saying on the Russian Television news show "Vesti."

He did not say when his resignation takes effect, so it was unclear whether he would attend the summit, as he has most other top U.S.-Soviet meetings during Mr. Gorbachev's rule.

Mr. Yeltsin's decree banning politics in the workplace could remove one of the Communists' surest footholds on power.

On Saturday, the independent Constitutional Oversight Committee asked Mr. Yeltsin to postpone the decree pending a review.

"People calling themselves Democrats are suppressing other opinions, and Mr. Yeltsin's decree is a part of this campaign," said legislative speaker Anatoly Lukyanov, who ordered the review. His comments were reported in the labour newspaper Rabochaya Tribuna.

## West African leaders to discuss Liberia polls

**ABIDJAN (R)** — Five West African presidents are due to meet in Ivory Coast Monday to work out details of elections to end Liberia's 19-month-old civil war.

But with little sign of a thaw between Liberia's two rival leaders since they embraced at a similar gathering a month ago, political analysts said the two-day summit might yield few clear results.

"It's a ways-and-means type of meeting instead of tackling the problem," one Western diplomat said.

The summit, hosted by Ivory Coast's veteran President Felix Houphouët-Boigny at his inland diplomatic capital Yamoussoukro, brings together leaders of a

five-nation committee charged with steering the divided country to free elections.

Gambian sources said President Dawda Jawara of Gambia, Abdou Diouf of Senegal and Joao Bernardo Vieira of Guinea-Bissau would fly together to Yamoussoukro Monday morning, where Togo's President Gnassingbe Eyadema was due to join them.

They are expected to try to thrash out the practicalities of mounting elections in a nation effectively partitioned by the war. Rebel leader Charles Taylor controls around 90 per cent of the jungle country but interim President Amos Sawyer, protected by a regional peacekeeping force, holds the capital Monrovia.

## Rebels may emerge victorious in Sri Lankan battle

**COLOMBO (R)** — Tamil rebels, outnumbered by government troops, could emerge victorious in a fierce battle for a strategic Sri Lankan army camp that has already cost more than 1,000 lives, political analysts said Sunday.

Whether a relief column of 5,000 soldiers reached the camp, besieged for 19 days, was not the question, respected political columnist Taraki wrote in the independent Sunday Island newspaper.

"The question, however, is that once the battle ends, will not the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) be able to gain more credence for its political claim that it is a Tamil national army capable of defending what it calls its 'homeland'?" he wrote.

The Sri Lankan army and the Tigers, fighting for a separate state for three million minority Tamils, have thrown all their resources into what has been described as the biggest battle of the 10-year-old ethnic war.

Since July 10, the Tigers have relentlessly pounded the army camp at Elephant Pass in the north with rocket-propelled grenades, mortar bombs and small arms fire.

The rebels are trying to take the 800-man camp on a causeway linking northern Jaffna peninsula to the rest of the island.

It would be a moral victory for the rebels even if the camp did not fall into their hands, analysts said.

"The fact here is that they have been able to fight the army for long period, despite being outnumbered and outgunned," one analyst, who declined to be named, said.

Since an army relief column landed on a beach 12 kilometres from the camp on July 14, the Tigers have shifted their focus toward holding up the reinforcements.

More than 960 rebels and 130 soldiers, including six officers, have been killed in the fighting, according to military figures.

Arms the Tigers would seize from the camp if it fell to them could bring about a quantitative change in the war, Taraki said. "This is why the army, I presume, is throwing in almost 8,000 soldiers and a vast quantity of resources into the thrust to save the camp," he said.

Military sources have declined to give the number of soldiers deployed in the operation or what weapons were being used. Newspapers say between 2,000 and 8,000 men are fighting.

The Tigers have called in reinforcements from other areas and raised their fighting force to 2,000 men from a few hundred earlier, the sources said.

The government misjudged and miscalculated the Elephant Pass situation, opposition member of parliament Anurudha Ratwatte said.

"There had been speculation for a long time of an attack on Elephant Pass but nothing was done to strengthen the defences of the camp," said Mr. Ratwatte, defence minister in a shadow cabinet of the main opposition Freedom Party.

Elephant Pass was crucial to the rebels, he said. "If they seize the camp, the Tigers will control the road from Vavuniya to Jaffna and most of the land area."

Vavuniya, 240 kilometres north Colombo, is the northernmost town under government control. Beyond the Tigers rule the north — except for four army camps, including Elephant Pass, on the peninsula.

The relief column has been struggling through minefields, unfamiliar terrain and battling fierce resistance.

"The resistance, admittedly, has been commendable. They (rebels) are throwing everything into the battle. Every foot gained is with great difficulty," one army officer said.

The relief column advanced just four kilometres in two weeks, Defence Ministry State Secretary Walter Fernando said Thursday. "They have an equal distance to go," he said.

In Tiger attacks on Elephant Pass Saturday night at least 32 rebels and five soldiers were killed, the officer said.

An army captain fired several rounds from a heavy recoilless rifle, stopping a bulldozer filled with explosives and a vehicle mounted a machine gun from breaking into the camp, he said. Both vehicles were destroyed. The captain was uninjured.

## Valentino to make Liz Taylor's wedding dress

**ROME (AP)** — Valentino will make Elizabeth Taylor's dress for her eighth wedding, an October marriage to Larry Fortensky, a representative of the Italian designer said Saturday. "Liz Taylor telephoned Valentino Thursday morning to ask him to design and make her a wedding dress," his business manager, Giancarlo Giammetti, told the Italian News Agency ANSA. "It will be a short day, although Valentino would have preferred a long dress for the actress." Ms. Taylor and Valentino have worked together on benefits for AIDS victims.

The couturier has designed gowns for Ms. Taylor for decades. Ms. Taylor and Mr. Fortensky were recently in Rome for the designer's bash marking 30 years of fashion fame.

## Elderly drug dealer gets probation instead of prison

**KANSAS CITY (AP)** — A judge allowed probation for an 83-year-old man who faced up to 30 years in prison for selling cocaine to undercover police officers. Judge K. Preston Dean cited Noah Hunter's age for the lenient sentence, but warned, "I would never want anyone to think that they can sell cocaine without risk." Hunter sold up to \$2,000 in drugs a day, said assistant county prosecutor Amy McGowan, who asked the judge to make an example of Hunter. "Send a message to all those people operating drug houses," she said. "He seems to be thumbing his nose at the police and the courts," Hunter pleaded guilty to selling cocaine to undercover officers at his home in September 1989 and March 1990. "I'm sorry I got myself into this," he said. The judge sentenced him to six years on both counts, then suspended the sentence and placed him on probation for five years.

## Jail inmates revolt over lack of milk

**ROGERSVILLE, Tenn. (AP)** — Prisoners in a county jail revolted during dinner and took over a cellblock after their ringleader became angered when milk rations ran out, an official has said. Nobody was injured. The inmates gave up after five hours, Hawkins County Sheriff Wayne Clevinger said. Some of them went on a rampage and destroyed bunks, high security telephones and other jail equipment in the riot, Sheriff Clevinger said. "One of the inmates charged with triple murder didn't like it when they ran out of milk," he said. The alleged ringleader, Shannon Lee Beckner, destroyed some serving trays and carts and convinced 32 other prisoners to barricade themselves in the cellblock, the sheriff said. Authorities persuaded them to give up late Friday night, he said. "They had nowhere to go and we convinced them we were only interested in prosecuting the ringleader," Sheriff Clevinger said. "In a situation like that where the jail is overcrowded, sometimes it just takes someone with the ability to stir up people." The jail's capacity is 42, but it houses about 70, Sheriff Clevinger said. Mr. Beckner, 22, will be charged with inciting a riot in a jail. He is awaiting trial for three counts of first-degree murder, the Sheriff said.

## False alarm at Madame Tussaud's

**LONDON (AP)** — Firefighters found headless corpses and prisoners stretched on the rack Thursday when they were called to investigate a report of smoke — in Madame Tussaud's waxworks Chamber of Horrors. Satisfied that the grisly figures were out in danger of melting, and more to the point that they were not real people, they left them where they were in the waxworks museum. Firefighters were called to Tussaud's after smoke was seen coming from the chamber, one of the most popular exhibits in the museum. The exhibit features representations of murders, executions, tortures and other bloody horrors. They discovered that smoke had been drawn into the room through the ventilation system from a fire on the roof. The fire was out by the time they arrived. No one was injured, none of the exhibits were damaged and the museum reopened later.

## Oil from sunken ship starts washing up on U.S. coast

**NEAH BAY, Washington (AP)** — Oil had begun washing up on Washington's coast from a sunken Japanese ship and could endanger thousands of birds and sea mammals in a national park, officials said.

More than 170 oiled seabirds, mostly common murrelets found in oil offshore, were being treated Saturday at a bird cleaning station set up near this makah Indian Reservation town, said Robert Hamlin, head of emergency services for Clallam County, which borders the reservation.

"This stuff is like glue. You can hear the little ones crying," Lorraine Durick, a volunteer with the Wild Animal Clinic of Monroe, told the Seattle Times.

Globs of oil mixed with kelp hit the western shore of tiny Tatoosh Island Friday evening, four days

after the Japanese fish processor Tanyo Maru sank in the Pacific Ocean. Tatoosh Island is just off Cape Flattery, the northwestern-most corner of the state.

The Tanyo Maru carried 273,214 gallons (1,038,213 liters) of bunker fuel and 91,071 gallons (346,069 liters) of diesel fuel. The spill was expected to be 100,000 gallons (380,000 liters) or less, said Ron Holcomb, a spokesman for the state Department of Ecology.

By Saturday afternoon globs of oil and a silver sheen on the water were within sight along six kilometres of coastline around Cape Flattery, coast guard spokesman Kevin Brunton said.

A small amount of oil from 32 kilometres shore also washed ashore on Cape Alava, 21 kilometres south of Cape Flattery, he said.

## Human rights team blasts Chinese legal system

**HONG KONG (AP)** — Of the 16,000 criminal cases filed last year in China's most populous city, Shanghai, only 30 were acquitted and less than half had the luxury of a defence lawyer, an Australian human rights delegation said Sunday.

"This gives you an idea of the problems the Chinese people face," said David Connolly, part of the first human rights delegation allowed in China. "The've got a long way to go."

The team also said doctors performed 600,000 abortions in China's most populous province of Sichuan last year compared with 2 million births.

The nine-member team of politicians and China experts painted a grim picture of human rights in China two years after the government crackdown on a pro-democracy movement in Peking. The group visited Peking, Shanghai, Chengdu and Lhasa, the capital of the troubled province of Tibet, on their 13-day journey.

Kevin Garratt, an official with the Australian Department of Immigration who is fluent in Tibetan, described the Himalayan province as "in danger of losing its culture" because of China's crackdown on an independence movement.

Alice Tay, a law professor at the University of Sydney, said China's legal system remained "Stalinist." She noted that under Chinese procedure right enshrined in China's constitution can not be cited in day-to-day court cases, thereby denying

them any value.

The delegates complained of being followed by squads of Chinese security agents, denied access to political prisoners and stymied in attempts to engage Chinese citizens in conversations.

"Everywhere we looked there were people wearing sunglasses and smoking cigarettes, spying on us," said Australian Sen. Vicki Bourne.

Still, delegation leader Sen. Chris Schacht said he felt China was "bubbling with debate."

"If I was a senior, aging Chinese leader, I'd be pretty scared," he told reporters in Hong Kong.

Delegates agreed that the Chinese were the most forthcoming about their "one child" policy that limits the size of Chinese families. China, with 1.1 billion people, views its efforts to limit population growth as a key to its future prosperity.

Sen. Bourne, citing interviews with Chinese family planning officials in Sichuan, said 600,000 abortions were performed in that province last year.

Sichuan, with an estimated 107 million people, is China's most populous province and recorded 2 million births during the same period, she said.

The senator, who sits on the board of Australia's Family Planning Association, said it appeared that the ratio of about three abortions for every 10 births in China had dropped slightly from a figure she received in 1988 of five abortions for every 10 births.

## Ershad lawyers withdraw

**DHAKA (R)** — Lawyers defending former Bangladesh President Hossain Mohammad Ershad on criminal charges have pulled out of the case, saying the jailed ex-ruler was trying to use them for "unethical" tasks.

"We are apprehensive of some activities of some lawyers," Gen. Ershad's chief defence lawyer, Sirajul Huq, told a judge who is trying the ex-president for amassing wealth beyond his means.

"Our life and honour are at stake. If he (Ershad) wishes, he may choose a new set of lawyers," Mr. Huq said Saturday.

Officials last week detained one of Ershad's lawyers, Jinat Ali, after police found in his

possession an unauthorised letter written by Gen. Ershad from prison.

Officials said they believed Gen. Ershad, already serving a 10-year prison term for illegal possession of firearms, had smuggled at least 25 letters through Mr. Ali.

The letters were addressed to leaders of the former ruling Jatiya Party and contained instructions to launch a campaign to topple the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, they said.

Writing secret letters in prison is a criminal offence for which both writer and courier face punishment.

## Gorbachev, Bush to discuss reform, sign arms accord

**MOSCOW (R)** — Presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush meet this week to sign away the strategic arms race, discuss Middle East peace and consider the next steps to integrate the Soviet Union into the world democratic community.

No surprises or startling announcements are expected from the two days of talks in Moscow, the third full-scale summit between the two men.

But officials from both sides say the meeting will further cement the new era of superpower harmony that followed the end of the cold war and their unprecedented cooperation over the Gulf conflict early this year.

The ceremonial centrepiece of the summit is the signing Wednesday of a START treaty cutting for the first time the number of long-range nuclear missiles and bombers.

After almost a decade of frustrating and highly technical wrangling, the Soviet Union and United States will agree to scrap roughly one-third of their most destructive weapons.

But this time, unlike the 20-odd previous meetings between U.S. and Soviet leaders since the nuclear age began, the real focus is not on how to avoid World War II.

The principal thrust now is how to further the process Mr. Gorbachev launched in 1985 of converting a one-party, command political system into a stable

multi-party democracy and meshing it into the world economy.

Mr. Gorbachev believes the West has a vital role, and interest, in helping this process and he put his case with his customary vigour to Mr. Bush and leaders of the other six top industrial nations in London on July 17.

He won plenty of verbal support, but no immediate cash.

Mr. Bush and the other Group of Seven leaders agreed to give Moscow associate membership of the International Monetary Fund, which would give it access to top-level technical advice on how to manage a market economy.

Soviet gross national product fell 10 per cent in the first six months of 1991 over the first half of 1990, with a continued slump in energy output cutting into export earnings.

Mr. Gorbachev wants Western technical help and is also keen for support in making the rouble convertible, which would stimulate investment by foreign firms.

Moscow believes the United States is less enthusiastic than other Western countries, notably Germany, over the idea of foreign support for Soviet reform.

"In the United States there is greater reserve than in other countries towards becoming involved in our plans," Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh said Saturday.

## S. Pacific appeals to nations to cut gas emissions

**KOLONIA, Pohnpei (R)** — Micronesia's president appealed Sunday to industrialised nations to cut emissions of greenhouse gases that could result in global warming, and a rise in sea levels that would swamp many coral islands.

"We in the Pacific areas feel that since we don't contribute to the greenhouse effect... the industrialised countries should take it easy," President of Micronesia Bailey Olter told a news conference on the remote island of Pohnpei.

"It is difficult, like the war between David and Goliath," he said, when asked if the 15 members of the South Pacific Forum could convince industrialised countries to slash carbon dioxide emissions.

"We will be passing whatever we can in the Forum to help reverse the warming effect," he said.

Several coral island states in the South Pacific Forum such as Kiribati, Tuvalu, Niue and the Marshall Islands, which lie just a few feet above sea level, are in danger of being submerged in the next century if sea levels continue to rise.

"We are concerned because most of our islands are flat corals that are less than 15 feet (4.5 metres) above sea level," Mr. Olter said.

Leaders of the 15-nation forum met over the weekend to map out plans to tackle the problem and to monitor sea levels and weather patterns in the region.

The Asian Development Bank has warned in a report that rising sea levels caused by global warming could turn thousands of Pacific islanders into homeless refugees by the 21st century.

For residents of low-lying coral atolls, the "margin for safety is very narrow," said Charles Bireke Birkeland, a marine biologist at the University of Guam.

The issue is expected to dominate discussion when the South Pacific Forum, composed of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and 12 smaller Pacific island states, formally opens.

The Micronesian government, which is playing host to the 22nd annual meeting of South Pacific nations, will press for action on the issue, Mr. Olter said. He gave no details.

"The more we push and persuade friends around the world, we are confident that something will be done," he said.

South Pacific leaders ended two-days of preliminary talks on Pohnpei, 3,000 kilometres south east of Japan, Sunday and were due to begin their formal meeting Monday.

The South Pacific nations are preparing a toughly worded statement demanding a halt to French nuclear testing in the region, an official said Sunday.

"It will be a strong statement, much stronger than people here expect," a member of the South Pacific Forum secretariat responsible for organising the annual conference said in an interview.

South Pacific leaders are angry at French attempts to portray the fact their last forum did not condemn the nuclear testing as evidence of improved relations between France and Pacific island nations.

Pacific leaders strongly opposed the resumption of French nuclear tests, New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger told reporters Saturday after a first day of closed-door talks.

France carried out its most recent series of nuclear tests at the Murorua Atoll ending earlier this month.

"I'm quite confident that the island leaders will want to again express their strong objection to that testing being carried out in our region against the desires of Pacific island-nations," Mr. Bolger said.

The United States had built an incinerator on Johnston Atoll, a



ate discussion when the South Pacific Forum, composed of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and 12 smaller Pacific island states, formally opens.

Forum nations may raise the issue in dialogue sessions with France due to begin Thursday.

The dialogue features talks between forum countries and their seven partners, the United States, Britain, France, China, Japan, Canada and the European Community (EC).

The South Pacific leaders welcomed a U.S. decision to cancel plans to destroy chemical weapons on a remote Pacific atoll, but voiced concerns it could still be revived, officials said Sunday.

The United States had built an incinerator on Johnston Atoll, a

coral outcrop some 1,300 kilometres southeast of Hawaii, to burn chemical arms stocks from Western Europe and the United States.

Washington dropped the idea after vehement objections from South Pacific states that feared destruction of the weapons would contaminate the environment.

"We want to see if the United States will push through on its commitment to dismantle the incinerator on the atoll," an official attending the South Pacific Forum said.

"They have put off building the plant and operating it to burn the remaining chemical weapons there. Until that (the dismantling) happens, we're not sure if the plan has been totally shelved," he said.